NEW

1964 - THE STORY OF - 1986
METAL

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148 PAGES OF HEAVY METAL THUNDER

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THE BIRTH OF HEAVY METAL – AND ITS UNSTOPPABLE RISE

20 years of Satanic verses, forgotten pioneers & monster riffs

SCORPIONS

JUDAS PRIEST

OZZY

THE GODZ

BLUE CHEER

AEROSMITH

SAXON

VENOM

BLACK SABBATH

Inside
BLACK SABBATH,
Zep, Purple and the 300 days that changed the world
IRON MAIDEN
The making of The Number Of The Beast
PLUS!
Motörhead, Dio & more

MOTÖRHEAD

THE OLD TESTAMENT 1964-86

DIAMOND HEAD

MANOWAR

RATT

SLAYER

DEF LEPPARD

DIO

MISFITS

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RUSH

GUNS N' ROSES

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METAL

THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. And then he thought: "Hang on a minute, let's not be too hasty here." And then God created pyro and light shows and lazers and shit and God said, "Fuck me, I'm going to have to come up with some good music to go with *this*... And, thinking about it, I better create hell too, or these guys'll have nothing to sing about..."

Welcome to the The Old Testament, the first in a two-part history of metal, in all its complicated, daft and terrifying glory. Complicated? Well, metal you see, all started with Eddie Cochran, but it didn't really exist until NWOBHM. Hot Chocolate made one of the early metal classics, but punk helped define it. Bon Jovi and Ratt stretched the definition of genre to breaking point – and made millions doing so. Grunge didn't kill metal – it saved it. Goth was a key influence on metal's future – and so was hip-hop.

The story of metal has taken many twists and turns over the years. This first volume takes us from metal's beginnings up to its mainstream peak around 1984. Volume 2 will pick up the story from the backlash to that mainstream success – thrash metal, Guns N' Roses – via alt.metal, nu metal and the many amazing sub-genres that make up the metal scene today.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Here are metal's first thrilling footsteps...

Scott

Scott Rowley, Editor In Chief

"In the beginning, God created heaven and the earth and God said, 'Thinking about it, I better create hell too or these guys will have nothing to sing about...'"

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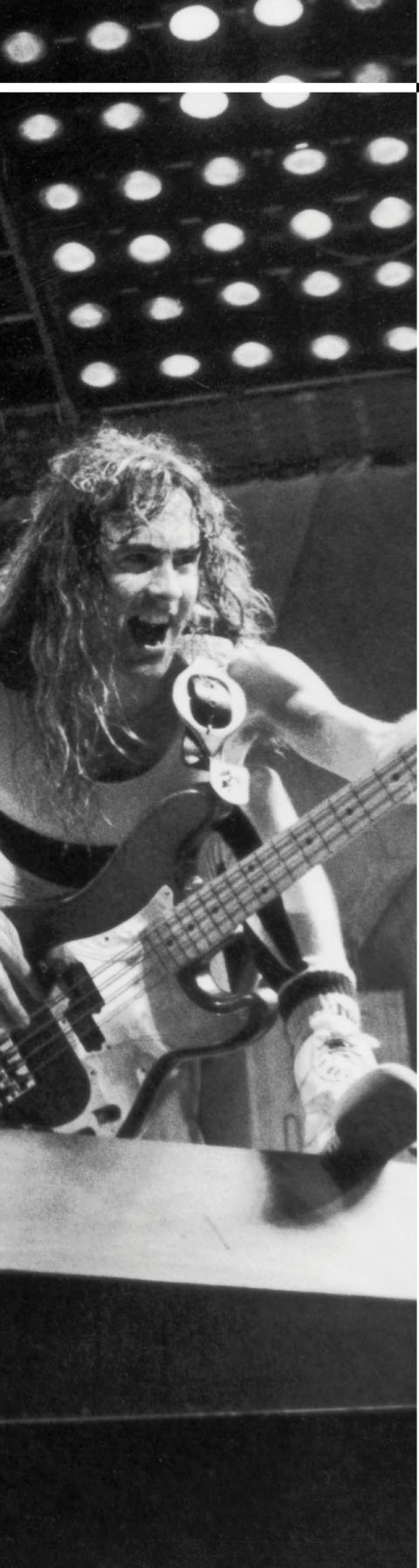

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THE BIRTH

The early days and stumbling footsteps…

WORDS: PHILIP WILDING

People worry about the machines taking over our future – forget it, the machines took over a long time ago. As soon as that first blunt click and crackle hummed through an amplifier and the first foot *whomped* down on a distortion pedal, then all bets were off. The future was here, rattling the window frames in the next room, talking to a new generation, giving everyone the summertime blues.

Eddie Cochran burnt briefly and brightly, no Cochrane, no *Something Else*, no *Summertime Blues*, no, arguably, The Who, Stones and Kinks, who took Cochrane's stuttering guitar motif and ran with it. (Rampaged with it, more like.) Eddie Cochran was one of the starting guns, a rattling pop aimed at the skies, but he wasn't alone.

Journalist Lester Bangs is credited as coining the term 'heavy metal' (in a review of Sir Lord Baltimore that made about as much sense as a child dropping a Letraset on the floor and kicking the pieces around), but for some it was Blue Cheer's murderous take on the aforementioned *Summertime Blues*, even if it did have all the nuance of a *Mrs Brown's Boys* gag. There's no denying its popularity or power though, it's like being hit by a truck that proceeds to reverse and roll over you again and again and again. Blue Cheer were quickly snuffed out but, across the water, artists like Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton were seeing how high they could stack their ever more sophisticated amplifiers and just how much fuzz and distortion could be yielded up through a pedal board. Juxtapose this relatively new technology with the traditional blues that had been seeping out from the Delta for decades and you had a new, twin-headed beast that would give free rein to bands like Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and the daddy of the Brit blues boom, Cream.

Black Sabbath took the seedlings of the blues and smashed them in to a hundred pieces before reassembling them into something that was so extraordinary and brooding and bloody that the popular press ran away screaming, while hordes of young men descended upon the band, ever eager to get caught up in some dark, Satanic pact. And while it could be argued that the first Sabbath album gave rise to heavy metal and everything that came after (Death Metal, Black Metal, Hard Rock, Blackie Lawless throwing meat at his audience), if you can't sense the faint whiff of the blues, at its ruddiest, snaking through the *The Wizard* then you've probably had your head stuck in a bass amp for far too long. But what a glorious racket.

Metal's roots are explored in the next few pages – forgotten bands like Captain Beyond and Sir Lord Baltimore nipping at the heels of the Zeps and the Sabs, plunging rock into the heart of darkness and creating something else. Obnoxious, terse, but mostly thrilling. I mean, c'mon: what other musical form makes it acceptable for a man to ride a motorbike onstage while his audience bangs their head in unison?

None. It's a one-off, the bastard child, never invited home at Christmas: it's you and me, it's metal.

THE LOST PIONEERS OF HEAVY METAL

Forget Sabbath, Cream and Led Zep; heavy metal was invented by bands now lost in the mists of time. *Classic Rock* tracks down members of **Iron Butterfly, Bloodrock, Leaf Hound** and the **JPT Scare Band** to get the lowdown on the birth of very loud music...

WORDS: SLEAZEGRINDER ILLUSTRATION: FIFTYSEVEN DESIGN

In the beginning, there was love, hope and happiness; there was no 'heavy'. It was the 1960s – nobody particularly needed heavy; they had The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and marijuana. But by the tail-end of the decade things got ugly. Suddenly there was war, sex, drugs, violence, tension, revolution and fighting in the streets. And so heavy came to pass.

Heavy metal, that immortal hoary beast of lust, power and violence, was born in those murky last moments of the 1960s. The debate over who coined the term and what band was the first to bash out the initial fuzzed-out power chord will likely rage on forever, but one thing we know for certain is that metal's first five years laid the diabolical groundwork for everything that would come later. Doom rock, stoner-metal, power-prog, slam-boogie… every hard, mean, gutbucket form of heavy rock'n'roll you can think of originated in that brief but fertile period between 1968 and 1973 when innocence and optimism was suddenly yesterday's news, and rock was ready for some darkness.

"Cream was the first definable heavy band," claims Joe S. Harrington, a full-contact rock journalist from Portland, Maine in the USA. Currently he edits *Kapital Ink* magazine. He is also the author of the mammoth, and quite brilliant, *Sonic Cool: The Birth & Death Of Rock'N'Roll,* which is arguably the most complete and thorough examination of rock music ever penned.

In the book, he traced the beginnings of metal back to the power-blues of Cream's *Disraeli Gears* album: 'They had heavy solos, serious musicianship and Druidic imagery, all things that would become trademarks of metal years later. And this was still in 1966. However, metal didn't start until two years later. By 1968, you had four bands that could definably be called heavy metal. MC5, Steppenwolf, Iron Butterfly and Blue Cheer.' All four left big footprints on the heavy rock trail. But only one of them can play the same song for an entire show.

Formed in San Diego in 1966, Iron Butterfly began life as a psychedelic band, but achieved a spectacular metamorphosis just two years later when bassist Lee Dorman joined the band and they recorded the legendary 17-minute proto-metal classic *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,* a swirling acid attack of incessant twin guitars and gorilla-fingered organ plunking.

Lee remembers its creation well: "That song was actually only about a minute-and-a-half long when it started. I'd just joined and the guitar player had just joined in August, so we kind of experimented with that song to kind of get the band together. The song took on a life of its own, it just kept going and going. The engineer just left the tape rolling, the producer wasn't even there when we recorded it.

"The other miracle was that we played it all the way through without any mistakes. Except for a couple of guitar and vocal overdubs, what you hear is what we played. If we had to do that in pieces, we might still be there."

Lee cites free-form FM radio shows for the song's inexplicable success. *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* stayed on American charts for two years. As to Iron Butterfly's status as metal pioneers, Dorman is diplomatic about it. "I have heard it said that Iron Butterfly are the fathers of heavy metal, but we were certainly not alone in that."

With the success of Iron Butterfly, the music industry scrambled to find similar veins to plunder. "The record companies were all owned by old men until The Beatles," Joe Harrington explains. "As it progressed, they hired hippies to run the labels. Suddenly, everything goes, because they have no idea what's going to hit. Everybody was caught off guard by the revolution. It was a time of wild experimentation. Heavy metal went into a bunch of directions."

One of the first offshoots of early metal was 'downer rock', a term coined by Black Sabbath drummer Bill Ward. Sabbath's minor chords, apocalyptic worldview and relentless gloom struck a nerve in a generation haunted by the draft, by the end of the peace and love era, by the encroaching funk of political and financial instability. And, then, as Harrington explains, there were the drugs…

"Downer rock was all about Quaaludes. I mean, they were called downers. The drugs went along with it. Drink wine, do some Quaaludes, listen to Black Sabbath. The downer rock movement was the last drug movement based in some kind of spiritual quest, just in this case it was a dark, Satanic quest. It was a dark buzz, fueled by Altamont and Manson."

"We had fun, we made love to beautiful women, we travelled to the edge of the Cosmic Universe and returned semi-intact." – Jeff Lintrell, JPT Scare Band

While Harrington cites Sabbath as the undisputed pioneers of downer rock, he believes it is Texan band Bloodrock that defines the genre. "Bloodrock were the all-time champions of negativity," he claims.

Okay, let's find out if that's true – and get it straight from the horse's mouth. John Nitzinger is a legend in Texas rock.

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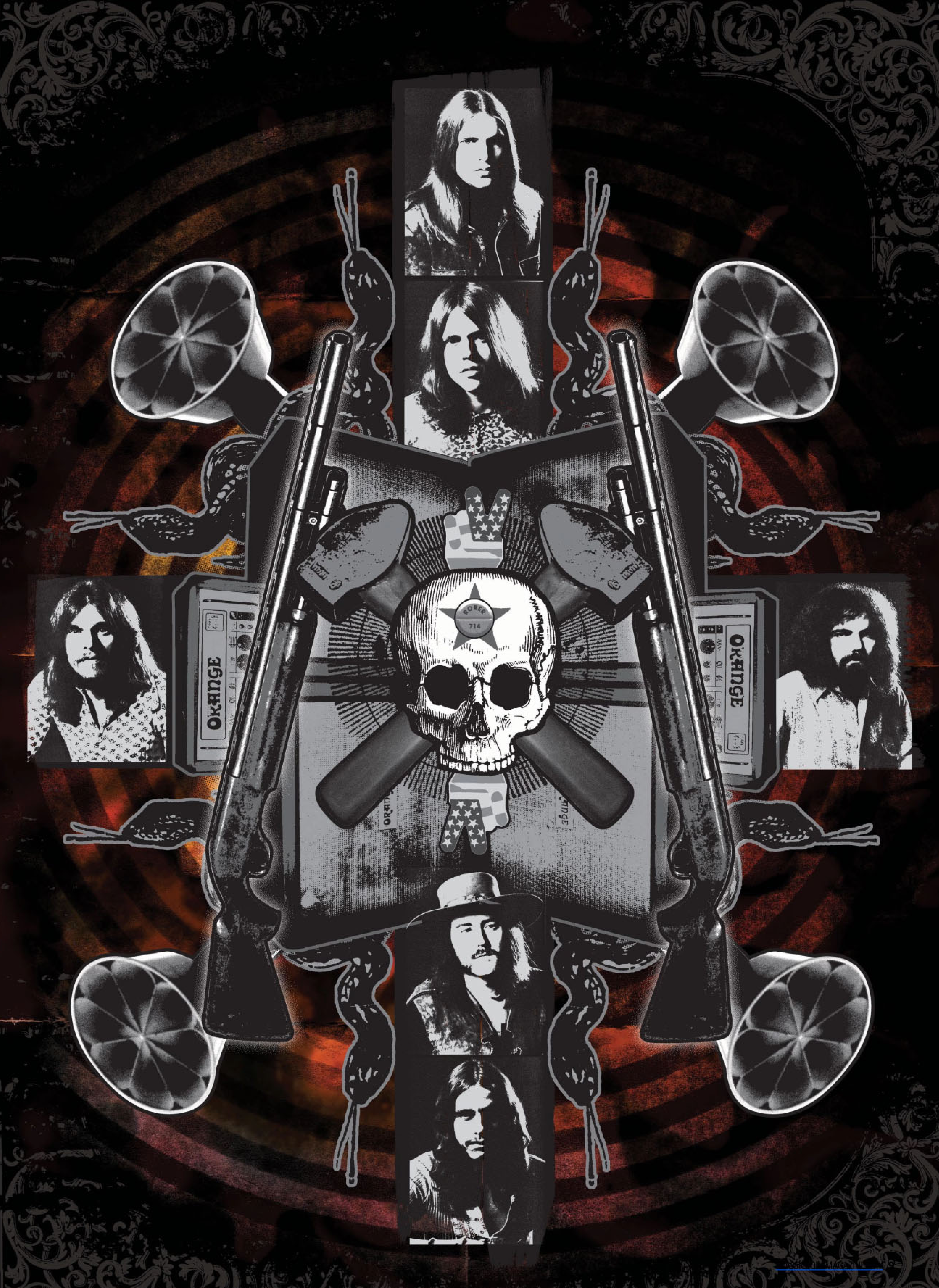
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His long and storied history includes a brief but eventful solo career in the early 70s that spawned the gritty hits *Louisiana Cockfight* and *LA Texas Boy*, as well as stints with Carl Palmer and Alice Cooper. But he is most well-known as the man who orchestrated the career of Bloodrock, one of the most nihilistic proto-metal bands to ever pen a seven-minute song about bleeding to death.

From his home in Lake Worth, Nitzinger explains how he got blood from the rock: "Jim Rutledge came up to me when I was playing at the Cellar and asked if I would write some songs for his band. So I said sure, and I got with 'em. I tutored them all in how to play the songs and their instruments."

Vocalist Rutledge and his band were hand-picked in 1969 by Grand Funk Railroad manager Terry Knight, who imagined his scruffy young hires as the meanest, loudest heavy metal band possible, a sort of Sex Pistols for the freak generation. "I taught them how to play the songs, and we went out to a lakehouse here in Fort Worth every weekend and jammed for months and months, putting it all together," Nitzinger says.

Eventually the band released eight albums throughout the 70s and have recently re-formed, but they are most remembered for *DOA*, a song from their 1970 album *Bloodrock 2*, which became an enduring, and highly unlikely hit on FM radio. *DOA* is seven minutes of pure pain, a doomy, funeral organ-fuelled creepy-crawler complete with a bleating ambulance siren and hopeless lyrics like: *'The sheets are red and moist where I'm lying/God in heaven, teach me how to die.'*

If you are looking for the darkest moment of 70s rock, look no further. Nitzinger remembers how the song came to be: "Jim came to me one day and said: 'I'm gonna write the sickest, most twisted song I can think of.' And I'll be damned if he didn't write *DOA*, and it became a hit."

As to why such a nihilistic song could ever catch on, Nitzinger has his theories: "It came out on Halloween, which was good, and it got banned, because it had the sirens in it. And when you're driving down the street and you hear sirens on the radio, well, cars started pulling over. The song became a traffic hazard. So they banned it, which made people want it all the more."

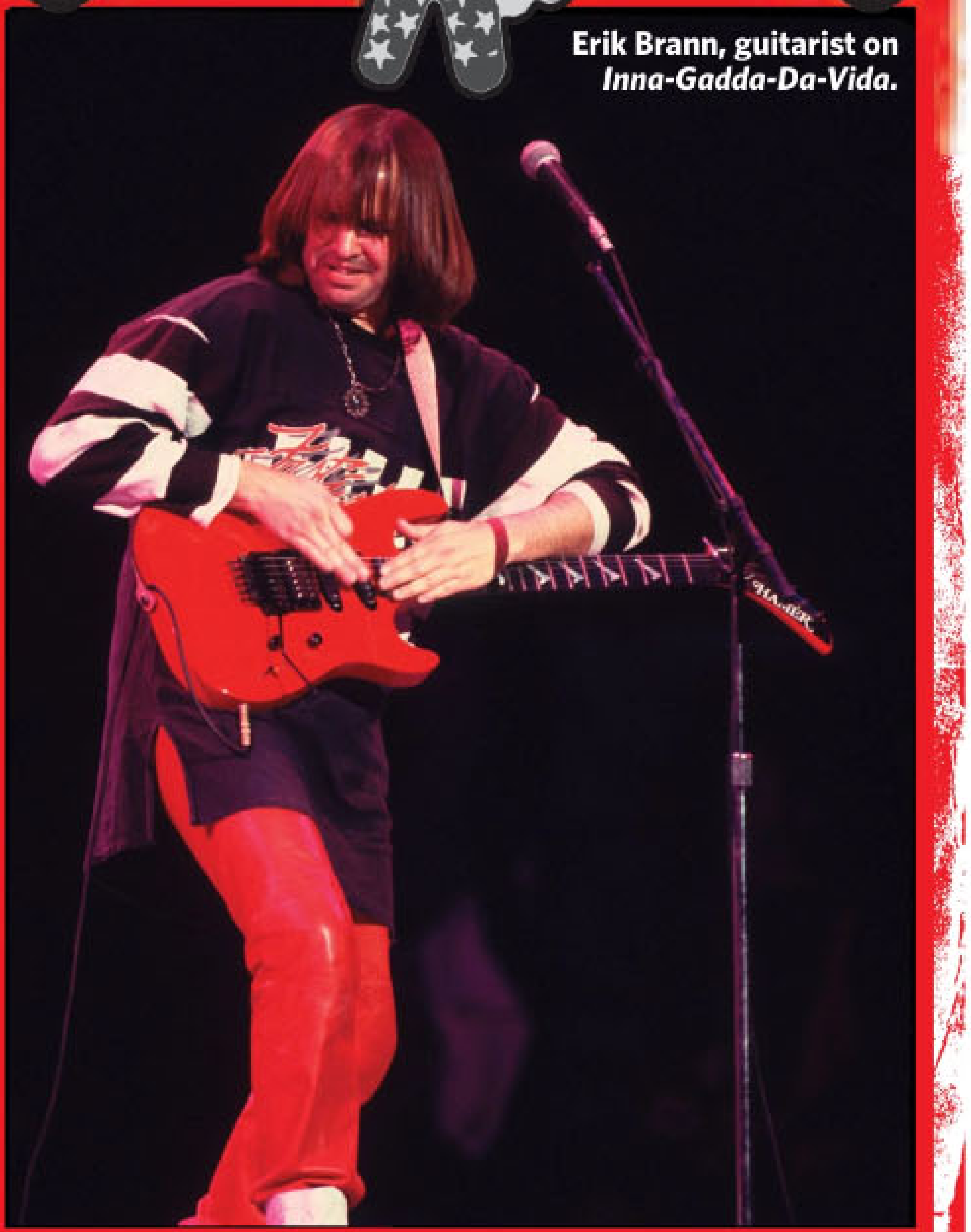
As to Bloodrock's reputation as the mood-killers of early metal, Nitzinger admits that the band courted the dark side on occasion, but is quick to point out that their mysterious image was largely a fan creation.

"There is some dark, tongue-in-cheek stuff in there," he says about the early Bloodrock albums. "At the time, we were very serious. We wanted to get down to the nitty gritty and really look at the dark side of things. We didn't want to be a sunshine band," he laughs. "This band always was mysterious. But it was the fans that made them that way. The fans built up this image. We didn't know we were on the dark side really, we were just young guys doing our thing. It was the crowd that defined us that way."

As to chemical influences, well, that's a story left untold. "Drugs? Quaaludes?" Nitzinger bristles at the question. "I don't talk about drugs. Hell, this band has been clean and sober for years now."

Get your wings: Iron Butterfly.

> **"We had to be the first band to use shotguns on stage. Loud music and smoke. That was the theme of the band." – Tony D'Lorio, Bang**



Erik Brann, guitarist on *Inna-Gadda-Da-Vida.*

Downer rock was not the only direction metal went in. By 1971, it had fractured into dozens of different micro-genres, and had become a worldwide phenomenon

Suddenly, the record bins were filled with wild new bands. As Joe Harrington put it: "The crazier, the more controversial, the more off-the-wall the music was, the better."

Dorman split from Iron Butterfly and formed the groundbreaking psychedelic-boogie band Captain Beyond. Sir Lord Baltimore, often cited as the godfathers of 'stoner rock', started up in New York. In Washington DC, Pentagram out-Sabbathed Sabbath and laid the groundwork for American doom metal. From Germany, Tiger B. Smith mixed bone-crunching hard rock with psychotic glam. South Africa spawned the acidpunk metal of Suck. Japan's Flower Travelin' Band mixed Middle Eastern rhythms with crushing Blue Cheer power-rock. Many bands released a single album or two and then disappeared into the ether, bands with sinister names and screaming guitars like Antrobus, Iron Claw, Josefus, Necromandus, The Firebirds, Warhorse, Armegeddon, Mourning Sun, Epitath, Jamul, Primevil, Savage Grace and Black Merder.

These are the forgotten pioneers of heavy metal. With little label support and spotty distribution, it's a wonder they were heard at all. As Joe Harrington points out: "There was no heavy metal section at the record store in 1972. You just had to look at the record and figure it out."

While most proto-metal bands succumbed to disco, punk, obscurity or James Taylor by the mid-70s, a few of them managed to endure. Some were even rediscovered by new audiences 30 years later. Three such bands are JPT Scare Band, Leaf Hound and Bang.

JPT Scare Band was the death metal of early-70s hard rock. Formed in Kansas City, Missouri in 1973, their nearly free-form psyche-metal went further than any bands before them. The aptly named band constructed towering walls of terrifying, evocative, druggy guitar noise, but played mostly for like-minded stoners in their rehearsal space, leaving them one of the most obscure proto-metal innovators.

As Scare Band drummer Jeff Litrell recalls: "We played live almost every night, it was just that we did it down in the basement with only a few tripped-out freaks in attendance."

Like their forebears in Sabbath and Bloodrock, the Scare Band were not afraid to explore the dark side in their music. Their first album, *Sleeping Sickness*, sounds like the death of the American dream at 150 decibels.

But as Litrell tells me, the idea was not to bum the audience out. "Nah, we just weren't eating regularly," he laughs. "We lived in a war zone of gunfire and stake-outs, pimps and hoes. When you had to walk somewhere you walked with purpose. It was right toward the end of the Vietnam débâcle and the times were somewhat oppressed. Believe it or not, we thought we were really up and just psychedelic. We never purposely intended to bum people out. We definitely wanted to scare them, though."

The JPT Scare band reunited after 25 years apart, and are currently shopping for labels to release a new album.

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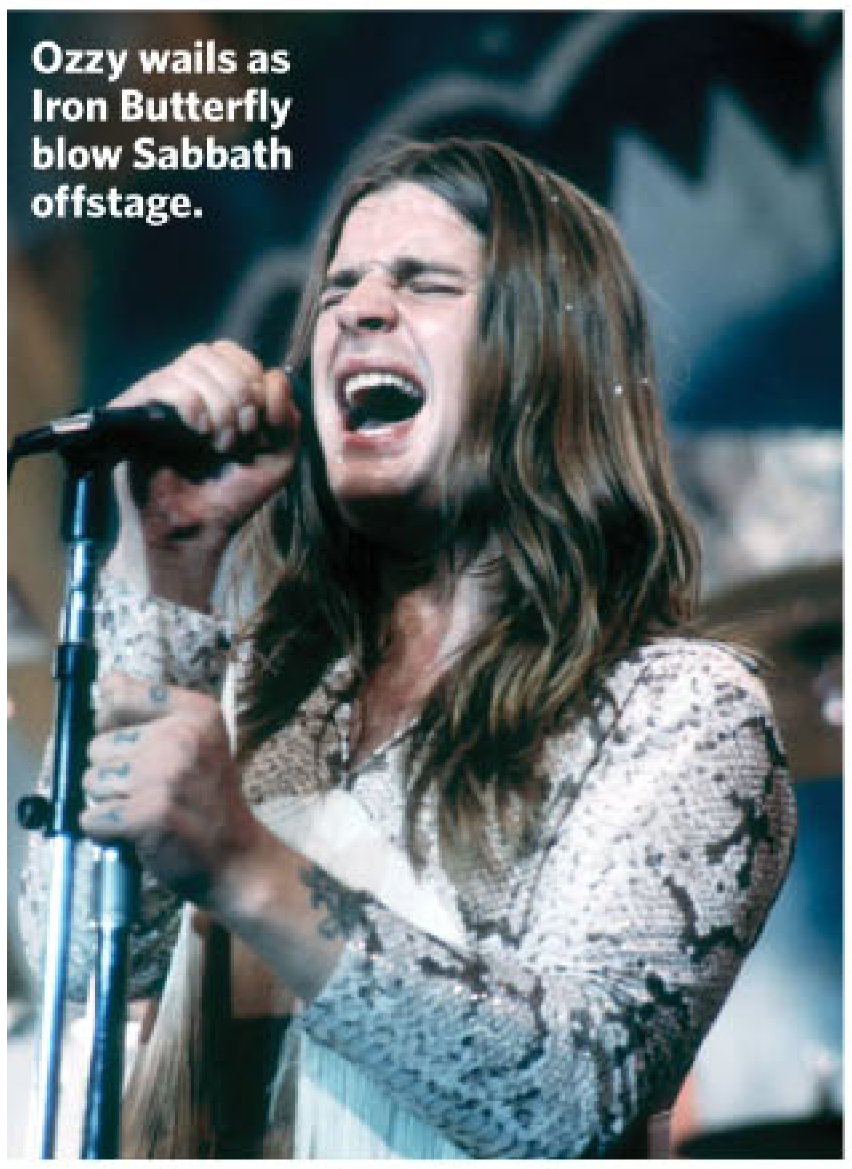
Iron Butterfly: a part of history.



Ozzy wails as Iron Butterfly blow Sabbath offstage.

Peter French is legend in the annals of proto-metal, having fronted three seminal bands from 1970 -'74: Cactus, Atomic Rooster and his own creation, Leaf Hound. The latter's sole album, 1970's *Growers Of Mushroom*, is now acknowledged as an undisputed classic of heavy riff'n'roll, and has gone on to influence countless bands, including nearly every major player in the stoner rock movement, from Kyuss to Monster Magnet. But as French explains, the band's leafy green imagery was more horrorshow then dope show.

"The name Leaf Hound was not what some people have presumed it to be," he says. "The idea of the name coming from a short horror story by Ray Bradbury called *The Emissary*, about a dog that had returned from the dead covered in mud and leaves."

Furthermore, French says, the band's image, like Bloodrock's, was largely the figment of revisionist imaginations. "The drug scene of course was around, but we never really took to it. The drug-crazed image of Leaf Hound that some people seem to have assumed couldn't be further from the truth, as the band was as straight as a dye when we wrote and played and recorded our album."

Through a series of murky circumstances, Leaf Hound was dropped from their label on the eve of their first album's release. "We found out much to our complete and utter dismay that our album was not now going to be released after all," French remembers. "The band broke up after hearing this, and ironically about a year after the band had finished, the record appeared, but of course now there was no band to promote it."

French went on to play in Big Bertha with Cozy Powell, as well as Atomic Rooster and Cactus, but still felt Leaf Hound never got their due. Then in 1993, the band finally got the recognition they deserved. "*Record Collector* magazine rang me out of the blue to my surprise to tell me what a fantastic band they thought Leaf Hound was, and invited me to do what was to become quite a major interview for their magazine."

Growers Of Mushroom was re-released in 1994 to critical acclaim.

French reformed Leaf Hound with an all-new line-up and is about to release a new album, *Leaf Hound Unleashed*.

Meanwhile, what of the final band in our deadly trio, Bang? We tracked down Tony D'Lorio, drummer for the Philadelphia metal combo, who immediately told us: "We had to be the first band to use shotguns on stage. We had a guy dressed in black shooting a shotgun. Because we're named Bang, see?"

Bang formed two weeks after Woodstock. "We were basically doing Black Sabbath then, trying to figure out what we were all about," Tony reveals. "Loud music and smoke, that was the theme of the band."

After fitfully trying to get somewhere in their hometown and enduring more than their share of strange events, including a singer who "went crazy and ended up in a mental institution", Tony took Bang and a tent on the road, traveling to Miami to find a record distributor to sign his band.

Somewhere along the way, they ran out of pot and pulled over in Daytona. "So we score a bag on the boardwalk, and now we're looking for papers," he remembers. "So we pass by this record store and there's a sign in the window for a Battle Of The Bands. We go in to talk to the guy, I tell him we want in. He has a real snotty attitude and tells us it was last week, we were too late. And then he says: 'Hey, Rod Stewart is playing over in Atlanta, why don't you go there and play with him?'

"So we're sleeping in a tent, and I say: 'We're going to Atlanta to play with Rod Stewart.' We get to the place where he's playing; it seats 17,000 people. I start knocking on doors until I find this guy who I think is the promoter. I tell him: 'We're Bang from Philly, I'd like you to hear us play. If you like us, we'll play on the show, if not we'll go away.' So we set up, we do our set for the guy, and he loves us. He says: 'Yeah, okay, you can open up the show.' That night it was Rod Stewart & The Faces, Deep Purple, Southern Comfort, and us. We had like six inches at the front of the stage to set up."

After that fateful night, the band began opening for major bands like Steppenwolf and Ike & Tina Turner, and eventually got signed to Capitol records. They released four albums of hard, politically charged rock, but split in 1974, when heavy metal fell out of favour, and the label asked if they could write a song like Helen Reddy's feminist hit *I Am Woman*.

"The song took on a life of its own. It just kept going and going. The engineer just kept the tape rolling."
– Lee Dorman on Iron Butterfly's *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*

"We couldn't," Tony shrugs resignedly. "Twenty-five years later, we got back together and carried on."

The official history of heavy metal will probably continue to put Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin on page one, but there is a rich, secret history of the hard stuff out there, buried under stacks of old, crackling vinyl.

These are the forgotten ghosts of metal. Relics from the dark ages of rock'n'roll. Ancient astronauts floating soundlessly into the void. But bands like Bloodrock, JPT Scare Band, Leaf Hound and Bang remember. And so do a growing cult of fans who are rediscovering the missing links of metal one acid-fried memory at a time.

"We had a ton of fun, we made love to beautiful women, we travelled to the edge of the Cosmic Universe, and returned semi-intact," says JPT Scare Band's Jeff Litrell. "We experienced interesting times, made great music and recorded a lot of it. Terry, Paul and I are still alive, we are still best of friends and we can still play scary music together. A lot of cool cats that we met along the way didn't make it. Everything has turned out just fine, all things considered."

Iron Butterfly's Lee Dorman has similar feelings about the legacy of his band and its epic proto-metal signature song. "It a part of history, it'll never go away. One hundred years from now, someone will pull out *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, play it too loud, and get thrown in jail."

"Man, I still get emails from people that say: 'I just wanted to tell you that you blew Black Sabbath off the stage that night in Columbia," Tony D'Lorio remarks as we wind up the Bang story.

And did you?

"Oh yeah, we definitely blew them off the stage. No doubt about it." ✖

BLUE CHEER

L.S.D. REHAB. WHISKY. FIGHTS.

...And in their spare time they invented heavy metal. Blue Cheer leaders Peterson, McDonald & Whaley tell their twisted tale.

Words: Ken McIntyre

They were the bellowing Gods Of Fuck. There were no big ugly noises in rock'n'roll before Blue Cheer. They created sonic brutality, coiling their teenage angst into an angry fist of sludge and feedback and hurling it at stunned, stoned hippies like a wave of mutilation. Everything about them was badass. They had a Hell's Angel for a manager, they were despised by the other bands in their scene, and they played so loud that people ran from them in fear. Proto-punk, proto-metal and proto-rehab, Blue Cheer took acid, wore tight pants, cranked their walls of Marshall stacks and proved, once and for all, that when it came to all things rock, excess was always best.

Formed by singer/bass player/mad visionary Dickie Peterson in San Francisco in 1966, Blue Cheer – named after the band's favourite brand of LSD – was at first a gangly, six-piece blues revue with much teenage enthusiasm and little direction. After seeing Jimi Hendrix perform for the first time, the band's prime movers – Peterson, drummer Paul Whaley and guitarist Leigh Stephens – thinned the line-up and discovered their sound, a wall-shaking throb of low-end beastliness that sounded exactly like the world ending. Anchored by a sweat-soaked, hell-for-leather cover of Eddie Cochran's teenage lament *Summertime Blues*, Blue Cheer's definitive sonic manifesto *Vincebus Eruptum* arrived in 1968. It was the blues defined by acid-fried biker goons, and it changed the world. Two years later, the band was effectively over, its members shell-shocked, disillusioned, ripped-off and super-freaked. And it would take 40 years for them to put all the pieces back together.

"Dick Clark said we gave rock'n'roll a bad name. We smiled and said 'Thanks a lot, Dick'." – **Dickie Peterson**

GETTY

Blue Cheer's original and present drummer, Paul Whaley, speaks in a ragged whisper that suggests life done the hard way. Much like his perpetual partner-in-crime, band leader Dickie Peterson, Paul now lives in Germany, far from the psychedelic madness of the US west coast that spawned them.

"He met a girl, I met a girl," he explains, simply. "I'm much happier here. That American style of life, it just makes me nervous." Between long and thoughtful pauses, Paul recalls how the Blue Cheer story began.

"Dickie and his brother showed up in Davis, California, in 1966," he says. "They just showed upon the streets of this small town, these two trolls. These two long-haired freaks."

Paul and Dickie became acquainted, and when Dickie moved to San Francisco to soak up the free-love-and-cheap-drugs atmosphere and form a band, he gave Paul a call. "I was doing nothing at the time, so I agreed, and I moved down there to this commune he was living in. I joined the band he was in and it eventually became Blue Cheer. It was a 60s blues band. We went to the Monterey Pop Festival and saw Hendrix there, and decided we wanted to be a three-piece. It all happened really fast. Within six months we were signed to Mercury Records and playing loud, aggressive music. The three of us got together and wrote *Doctor Please* and *Auto Focus* for the first album, and it sold millions. That *Vincebus Eruptum* album has brought us to this point."

As with any revolutionary concept, Blue Cheer had its detractors. *Summertime Blues* climbed the charts, and Blue Cheer were the toast of the town. Unless, of course, you asked the bands they actually had to play with.

"People thought we were just making noise," says Dickie Peterson, from his home in Germany. "They thought we were a detriment to the scene. I just knew we wanted to be loud. I wanted our music to be physical. I wanted it to be more than just an audio experience. This is what we set out to try and do. We ended up being in a lot of trouble with other musicians of the time. I remember Mike Bloomfield came up to me at the Avalon Ballroom, and he says, 'You can't do that'. I said, 'C'mon, Mike, you can do it, too. All you gotta do is turn this knob up to 10'. He hated me ever since. He was this great accomplished musician and I was this 18 year old smartass," Dickie laughs. "We did have a bit of an arrogance, but it was nurtured by people like that criticising us."

Despite being heavier and louder and more stoned than everyone else, Blue Cheer had a song in the charts, and so they were forced to make the rounds on Top 40 radio shows and prime-time television programs just like any other band. It was not always a perfect fit.

"We were on *American Bandstand*," Dickie remembers, "And Dick Clark [*AB*'s host] didn't like us at all. My manager was a Hell's Angel, and we were sitting there smoking a hash pipe, and Dick Clark comes in and says, 'It's people like you that give rock'n'roll a bad name'. We looked at him and smiled, and said, 'Thanks a lot, Dick'. We did the Steve Allen show too, and that was a real kick in the ass. When they introduced us, Steve Allen said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, Blue Cheer. Run for your life'."

Media relations was just one of the hard lessons the young band had to learn.

"We were basically street kids," Dickie explains. "We were never around the kind of money we were getting. There was a lot of financial mismanagement. All the songs I wrote, I lost my publishing for all of those. I didn't know it when it happened. There was a lot of business – not just with us but with a lot of bands in the 60s – that was just slipshod."

1968 was still in full-swing when Blue Cheer were marched back into the studio for their second album, and already there were signs of wear and tear in the band. Guitarist Leigh Stephens had quit, fearing deafness if he continued to play with the louder-than-God band. He was replaced by Randy Holden. *Vincebus Eruptum* was recorded in three days, with very little mixing. For their follow-up, the label demanded some actual production. This proved difficult.

"We had never done a studio production," Dickie explains. "It was all new to us. We couldn't turn our amps up the way we wanted to and get the tones we wanted. So the record company rented a pier in New York Harbour, and so we went out there with a mobile unit and recorded all the basic tracks. And then we went back into the Record Factory and did all the sweetening – which was a lot."

The result was 1968's blistering *Outsideinside*, perhaps the only album in existence recorded outside, in New York Harbour, because the band were too loud to play in a studio. "We knew we were doing something that no one had done before," Dickie says. "We thought it was so absurd, we just had to do it."

Despite being nearly as loud and twice as fuzzy as its predecessor, *Outsideinside* failed to do the brisk business *Vincebus*… did. While the band continued full-bore, the atmosphere in San Francisco and in the band were both radically changing.

"You know, there were some sides of the 60s that were absolutely amazing," Dickie says. "You could go down to Haight Street, and if you were hungry and didn't have any money you'd be fed. If you were out of money and you had your wits about you, you'd find a place to sleep that night. It wasn't until hard drugs walked in, around 1969-70, that it started going sour. We were using by then. I don't hide the fact that I was a heroin addict for 15 years. I've been away from that since the late 70s, but that's when things all went to shit. There was a lot of desertion from the revolution. There were a lot of people that went back to college or went back to their parents' real estate agency or selling life insurance, on and on. I see 'em all the time. In one respect, I understand it. Maybe if I'd been educated, I would've too, but I've never done anything but play music. So I never had anywhere to go to. But another side of me says that it's desertion in the face of the enemy."

Paul Whaley quit the band in 1970. "We started screwing around with drugs," he says. "And the wrong kind of drugs, too. The money was going, there was conflict between me, Dickie, and our guitar player at the time, Randy Holden. The chemistry just wasn't right. There were arguments, and we just didn't want to be around each other. So we just decided to break it up."

Soon after leaving the fold, Whaley was invited to join Brit folk-psych band Quiver. Unfortunately drugs hobbled any chance of the situation working, and Whaley soon after dropped out of the music scene completely. He spent the next decade lost in an endless loop of dope and rehab. Peterson struggled as well, not just with drugs, but with a seven-album record contract that still needed to be fulfilled, despite the fact that his band had already broken up.

"The band sorta dissolved, and I got stuck trying to pull musicians together "to try and get stuff done," Dickie says. "That's why out of those first six albums, four of them are much different. I don't think the music is bad, it's just different."

Dickie and a motley crew of friends, hangers-on, and studio musicians eventually recorded and released four more 'Blue Cheer' albums from 1969 to 1971. They are clearly rushed affairs, jammed with forays into country rock, organ-dominated prog and breezy West Coast jangle. Although each album contains a gem or two, these albums are clearly not the work of the young savages who played so loud they had to record outside. Those mad bastards were already long gone. When the whole trying process was over, Dickie Peterson, addicted, drained and heartbroken, chopped off his freak-flowing mane and vanished.

"I retreated for a while," he acknowledges. "Like I said, I was addicted. In 1973, I went into rehab, and I stuck with it for four years. At the time, I wasn't even sure I still wanted to be a musician. When I was finished with that, I was sort of incognito. I would go into places and hear bands cover my songs. I would never identify myself, though. I was in Northern California, just being anonymous. Then, around the late 70s, I ran into a friend who knew where Paul was. I called up Paul, who was living in England. I asked him if he was interested in talking about putting the old band back together. He said he was, so I flew over and we talked about it. Two weeks later, we were back together in the states, hashing it out."

"It was out of the blue," Paul remembers. "At the time, we had no contact with each other whatsoever."

"We were just trying to get it together," Dickie says. "We had gained nothing from our earlier successes. It was like trying to start all over again."

Andy 'Duck' McDonald grew up in Almeida, New York, the same heavy metal hotspot that spawned Ronnie James Dio and Manowar. He's played in many bands over the decades, from Shakin' Street to Savoy Brown, but for the past 20 years, he's been the new guy in Blue Cheer. Besides swinging Cheer's mighty axe, he also serves as their business manager and, when it's called for, their historian.

"I met Dickie through Carl Canedy," Duck remembers. Canedy, the drummer/producer/visionary behind New York raunch n' roll institution The Rods, served as producer on Blue Cheer's first 'comeback' album, 1984's *The Beast Is Back*. McDonald was also in the same Rochester studio working on Canedy's star-spackled solo album, *Thrasher Supersessions*.

"So, we were both in the studio at the same time," Duck explains.

"I was a drinker at the time, and so was Dickie. I had a bottle of Jack Daniel's in the studio, and I made the mistake of leaving it there. Dickie happened to find it. We're talking 10 in the morning here. So I walk in the studio about noon, ready to work, and Dickie's in there, and my bottle's half gone. I go, 'What are you doing? That's my whisky!' But he was so cool and so innocent about it that I said 'Fuck it', and we just finished the rest of the bottle together."

Dickie doesn't remember the meeting in such friendly terms.

"We got in a fight over whisky," he says. "So I went and bought another bottle, because he's much bigger than me. I mean, I'm no idiot."

"I really liked his attitude," Duck says. "He wasn't a jerk or a rock star. We went our separate ways after that. They went on tour and did *The Beast Is Back* record, and I did my own thing. It was a few years before I heard from him again."

Released on New York's Megaforce Records, one-time home to thrash metal juggernauts like Metallica and Anthrax, 1984's *The Beast Is Back* was to be Blue Cheer's comeback record. It was their first album in more than a dozen years, and arrived near the peak of heavy metal's stranglehold on American pop culture. The only problem was, Blue Cheer may have spawned the whole genre, but they weren't a heavy metal band.

"I wasn't too surprised that they ended up on Megaforce," Duck says, "Because there was a resurgence at that time. Heavy metal was huge, so it was a good time to bring back Blue Cheer. Of course, the guy they had then, Tony Rainier, was a heavy metal guitar player. It's just what you had to play at that time. As well as, you know, the puffed-up hair and tight pants. Dickie even had a perm at that point."

HEAVY METAL THUNDER

Four bands without whom metal music as we know it would not exist.

No Black Sabbath, no heavy metal..

BLACK SABBATH

You don't *really* need to ask why, do you? With Tony Iommi's doom-laden riffs and Ozzy's other-worldly wailing, it set the template for the metal that would follow.

CREAM

It's easy to forget that today's easy-listening Eric Clapton was the guy who came up with some of the biggest riffs ever. Along with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, Clapton damn near invented the power trio.

LED ZEPPELIN

They bastardized the blues and brought it kicking and screaming into the 70s. With Pagey's dynamic riffs, Bonzo's thunderous drums and Percy's Tolkien-influenced lyrics, heavy music would never sound the same.

VANILLA FUDGE

Like Blue Cheer, the Fudge were a psychedelic band at heart, but (just like BC) it was their thunderously heavy, slowed-down versions of pop songs – like The Supremes' *You Keep Me Hangin' On* – that would inspire countless metallers.

"Tony, who was our guitar player in the early 80s, this was his concept," Dickie says. "I was pretty much against it. Not because I think heavy metal is a bad thing, because I don't, it's just not us. We're a heavy, low-end, hardcore rock'n'roll band."

Mottled with bad ideas – including a screech-metal remake of *Summertime Blues* – the noodling *The Beast Is Back* was greeted by fans as a curiosity, at best. Still, the band was together again, tenuously or not, and Dickie wanted to make the best of it. Blue Cheer spent the next few years slogging it out in the heavy metal trenches, waiting for the spandex kids to come around to their way of thinking.

"In 1989, Dickie wanted to go to Germany," says Paul Whaley, "and Tony didn't want to fly. He was afraid Blue Cheer would jinx him, and the plane would crash. So Dickie gave Duck a call, and he went to Germany with Dickie and another drummer. I didn't want to go to Germany, either. I thought there was a jinx against Blue Cheer at the time, as well."

Duck agreed to do the tour, and the band recorded a live album, 1989's *Blitzkrieg Over Nuremberg*, just two nights in. Although this line-up was short-lived, Duck would return to the fold again and again over the next few years. Paul Whaley finally got over his fear of flying and joined Dickie in Germany, where they would eventually put down roots. Meanwhile, back home, a certain kind of metal died an embarrassing death at the hands of Seattle's flannel mafia. Time for the Cheer's second comeback.

"Here was an opportunity, " says Duck, "With all these grunge bands. Blue Cheer had a heavy influence on a lot of those bands."

"They liked us because we didn't write songs about devil worship," Dickie says. "We wrote songs about drugs and sex, just like them."

Clearly, Blue Cheer's downer-fuzz and proto-punk holler were pronounced influences on bands like Green River, Soundgarden and Nirvana, so it seemed like the perfect fit. In 1990, the band recorded a new album, *Highlights And Lowlives*, with grunge superproducer Jack Endino. Despite its grunge-ready, doom-washed excess, the album fizzled, as did grunge. The band retreated to Germany, where they tinkered and retooled. Unhappy with the German management, Duck quit, and was replaced with a German flash metal guitarist Deiter Saller. The resulting album, 1992's *Swimming With Sharks*, was another misfiring foray into metal. "I was very displeased with the record company, with the production, with the whole thing," Dickie remembers. "All I wanted to do was it get it done and get out."

The Blue Cheer story effectively goes dark for the rest of the 1990s. At the tail end of the decade, Duck McDonald returned to the fold for a successful – if slightly *Spinal Tap*-esque – tour of Japan. Over the next few years, the trio of Peterson, Whaley and McDonald solidified into perhaps the most stable and creative line-up so far for the constantly embattled band. The next step was to write and record that next great album, the one that could stand up beside *Vincebus Eruptum* as a definitive document of Blue Cheer's mastery of fuzz and volume. It took them nearly a decade, but eventually, they did.

In 2007, Blue Cheer released the overwhelming *What Doesn't Kill You*, a 12-ton punch to the snot-locker that sounded less like a creaky 60s band reliving fuzzy, ancient memories than a vital new force of dope-rock motorcycle crazies on a village-pillaging rampage. Ear-searing scuzz-rockers like *I Don't Know About You* and *Rollin' Dem Bones* combine jungle-beat primacy with stoner-rock crunch and Blue Cheer's patented low-end elephant stomp in an orgy of manly swagger and pill-shovel excess. It is clearly their best record since 1968's *Outsideinside*, and that is entirely the point.

"It was an attempt to combine everything we've been," says Dickie. "And bring it up to date."

Duck elaborates: "I said to Dickie, for this album, we have to go full circle. We have to tie the first two albums with this new album, and everything in

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Blue Cheer: "We knew we were doing something no-one had done before."

"Not only am I not dead, but I remember every moment of the 60s. That's LSD for you." – Dickie Peterson

between, well, that just kinda disappears. We had to tie up the beginning and the end. I say that because I don't know how many Blue Cheer records Dickie's got in him. Maybe another one, I don't know. This could be Blue Cheer's last record, and that's the way we looked at it."

Despite the new album's virility, it did not make the back-in-black splash the band had hoped. Surely it will gestate, and five decades from now, way-out teenage freaks will form biker gangs and sex cults based on its teachings. That, however, does not help the band now. Fortunately for them, the albums have always been incidental. The real proof of their menace and might occurs onstage.

"I think when we play them live, it's a better representation of the songs than what's on the album," says Paul Whaley.

"When we play them live, people go fuckin' crazy. We've done tours with a lot of heavy young bands in the past few years, and we stand right up next to 'em, if not surpass them. Blue Cheer is a really heavy band, man," he says, with obvious pride. "It's a great feeling to play so aggressive and loud again."

Paul and Dickie both live in Germany full time now. Duck lives in upstate New York. You'd think that would make playing live difficult, but it is evidently a trifling matter to these everlasting behemoths.

"It's not as difficult as it seems," Dickie says. "We just have to figure out where we're supposed to be, oil the gears, and hit it."

"What we do is we headline small clubs and we get all these great new bands to open for us," Duck explains. "Mostly from the stoner rock scene. Bands like Dead Meadow, Buffalo Killers and The Suplecs. We love these bands because they're heavy and cool, and they like us because we're not assholes or rock stars. It's wonderful to be able to tour in that atmosphere. I mean, we're 60-year-old men moving our own equipment, touring in a van, just like these kids are. They see us doing it and they can't believe it. We're back in the garage," he says, "And that's where we like it. That's where we belong."

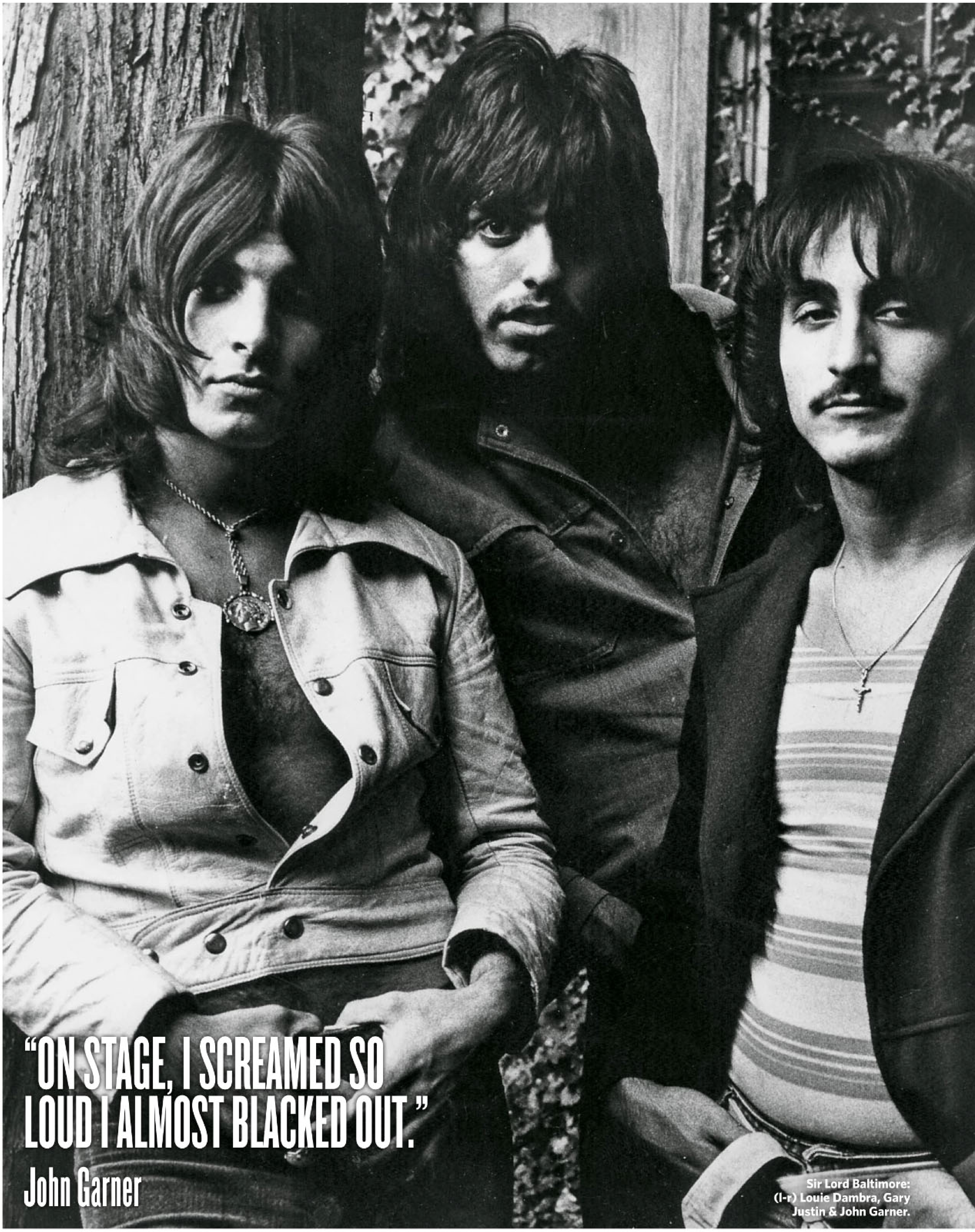
As Blue Cheer vault past their 40th year in rock'n'roll, it is easy to see why they've endured, despite all the dirty deals, lost decades and bitter disappointments. They are part of a very exclusive cabal of 60s and 70s cult rockers who never, ever lost their street cred – streetwalkin' cheetahs and lightning smokers who maintained their aura of teenage cool even as they enter their sixth decade and beyond. Bands like The Sonics, The Stooges, the MC5, Steppenwolf, Hawkwind, the New York Dolls, and Blue Cheer will never find themselves on the bottom-rung of some creaky oldies revival show. They all remain vital conduits to rock's primal source and still attract as many with-it kids as they do greying, freak-flag holdouts. It's 40 years later, and Blue Cheer still know how to kick out the jams, motherfucker.

"If we were ever considered nostalgic, we'd quit," says Dickie. "I really mean that. Because that would mean we could no longer do what we do. See, it's not like fathers and sons at the shows, it's grandfathers and grandsons that are coming to see Blue Cheer. It's unbelievable. We're living testimony that it's not over after 30."

Certainly, the touring may have slowed, and it's entirely possible that *What Doesn't Kill You* will remain Blue Cheer's final album. But the story is far from over. The band is still playing European festivals and taking on shorter US club tours. There's a live DVD in the works, and Dickie Peterson is hard at work on his first solo album. The odds are, Blue Cheer will be bringing their devastating low-end to some town near you soon. And you probably won't even believe it. "Half the time, when people see a Blue Cheer show advertised, they don't believe it," says Duck. "They think it's got to be some kind of Blue Cheer cover band. They just don't really don't believe it's possible." Duck laughs. "People just figure, 'Those guys can't possibly still be alive.'"

Dickie's been hearing rumors of his demise for years now, and so far, they've all been false. "Not only am I not dead," Dickie chuckles, "I remember every second of the 60s. LSD does that for you."

Dickie Petersen died aged 63, on October 12, 2009, from liver cancer. Rush's Neil Peart said, "Dickie Peterson was present at the creation... His music left deafening echoes in a thousand other bands."



“ON STAGE, I SCREAMED SO LOUD I ALMOST BLACKED OUT.”

John Garner

Sir Lord Baltimore: (l-r) Louie Dambra, Gary Justin & John Garner.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Sir Lord Baltimore toured with Black Sabbath and were a core influence on the stoner rock movement. Singer/drummer John Garner looks back at the drugs, dysfunction and dirty deeds that doomed them and also sealed their legend.

Words: **Ken McIntyre**

They were Fuck Barbarians from Planet Garbage, come here to splinter skulls; a proto-thrashing teenage bloodbath sealed on wax. Over two albums and just 29 gigs, they defined a genre and left tantalising clues about the future of rock. Sir Lord Baltimore's music was so alarmingly intense, it required a whole new terminology to explain it – 'heavy metal', naturally – while their instrument-smashing, chuggernaut on-stage prowess was so fearsome that even Black Sabbath resorted to (ahem) sabotage to keep up with them.

But underneath the neanderthal war-whooping were three freaked-out adolescents from Brooklyn, New York, green but eager, shoved into the spotlight much too early and let loose to flail away in the pantheon of the rock gods. They never stood a chance. Still, their long shadows still loom, and their legend continues to grow. The ultimate cult band, as influential as they are stubbornly obscure, Sir Lord Baltimore remain the original heavy metal kids.

John Garner, Sir Lord Baltimore's singer, drummer and founding member, was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. You can hear it in his accent and his no-nonsense delivery. He speaks about his teenage years in the 60s like most people growing up in that heady time do: with reverence and awe.

"I had a lot of influences in the black arena of music," he says. "Sam Cooke, Chubby Checker. I used to listen to all the Motown stuff and I used to sing to them. I used to do the twist, man. It was a great era."

Garner began playing drums and dreaming rock'n'roll dreams in the late 60s. One afternoon in 1968 he met a flashy rich kid with a guitar who would change the course of his career and, ultimately, his life.

"I met Louie [Dambra] in front of our high school. He was sitting in his Porsche," he laughs. "He had some dough. Anyway, I met him and I said: 'I heard about you.' And he said: 'I heard about you, too.' So I got in his car and I said: 'Well, let's play. Let's do somethin'.' So we started rehearsing in my basement, just jamming. And then I read an ad in the *Village Voice* that said: 'Heavy band needed for recording.' So we responded."

Garner, Dambra and bassist Gary Justin – another high-school chum – took a fateful trip into the city. At Smile Studios they met A&R man and fledgling producer Mike Appel, and gave him a dose of their teenage thunder.

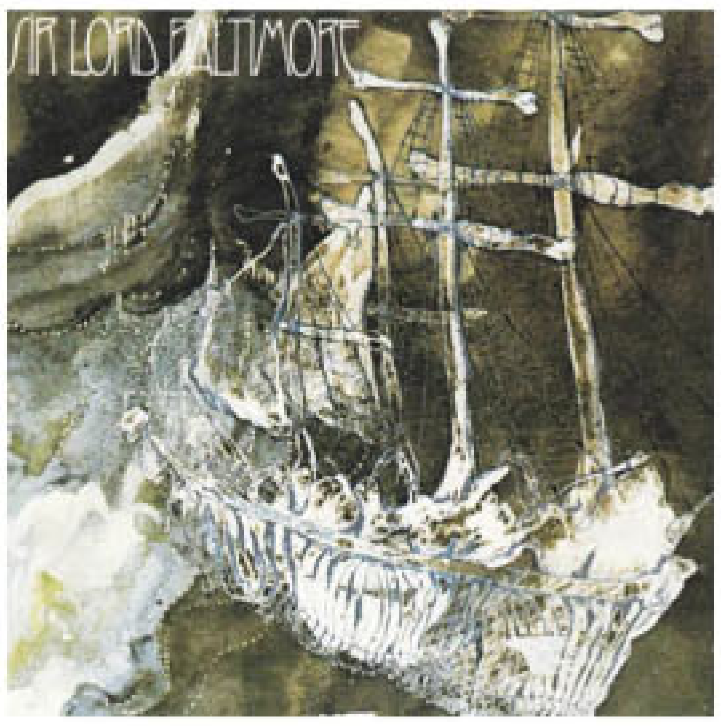
"We put together four songs that were sorta half-assed," Garner remembers, "and he freaked out. He loved us. Mike wanted to immediately record us, because he saw potential for him to make out on a deal. And you know, I was 18. What the hell does an 18-year-old know about the music business? And so we signed."

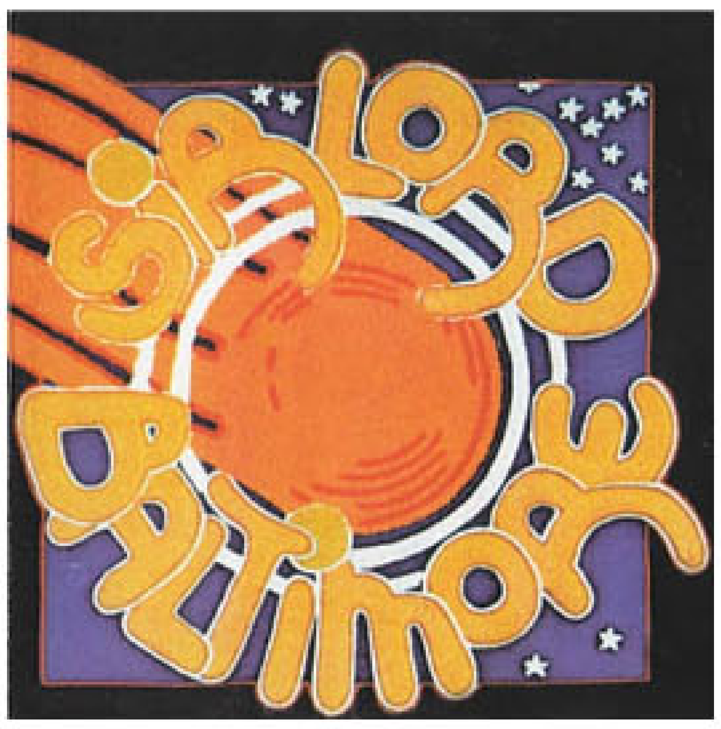
Along with the production deal came high-powered manager Dee Anthony. Anthony worked with mega-watters like Joe Cocker, the Faces and ELP, and had a simple plan for the band: hit the stage running, and don't look back.

"He was a pretty powerful fella," Garner says. "Our first show was playing Carnegie Hall. Our second was the Fillmore East. That's pretty unheard of."

Not a bad schedule for a band that didn't even have a name yet.

"Our producer, Mike Appel, named us," Garner remembers. "He was looking at this movie with Paul Newman and Robert Redford – *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*. Both of those guys say the name 'Sir Lord Baltimore', because they were running away from an Indian tracker named Sir Lord Baltimore. I said: 'Okay.' I mean, who gives a shit what the name of the band is? Especially back then. It was the British invasion, so people might have thought we were English. I didn't care."





The newly christened band signed to Mercury Records and began work on their first album, the manic, hard-charging *Kingdom Come*, at Electric Lady Studios. By the time they were through and the album hit the bins in 1970, 'metal' was not just an element, but also an art form.

"We were the first ones to be called 'heavy metal', says Garner. "It was in an issue of *Creem* magazine. That's a fact."

Indeed, Garner's story checks out. 'Metal' Mike Saunders, later of garage-thrashers the Angry Samoans, reviewed *Kingdom Come* in the May '71 issue of the magazine, and pegged SLB as possessing all the "heavy metal tricks in the book". As well they should – they invented them. Garner places most of the blame for their sonic excess on their youthful enthusiasm.

"Well, I loved Jimi Hendrix. I loved Led Zeppelin, but who doesn't? But really, we had our own style, because we were frantic. We were very young, I was 18, and we were super-high-energy. I sang so hard I'd almost pass out. I used to go through metal foot pedals, break 'em in half. Cymbals, forget about it. I used to bang the shit of them and split them in half. We were intense."

With an arsenal of proto-headbangers like *I Got A Woman* and *Helium Head* in their war chest, Sir Lord Baltimore hit the stage for some very high-profile gigs.

"To be honest, I felt we should have been nurtured and played some little dumb shows here and there, not play Carnegie Hall for our first gig," Garner says. "You know what happened? Gary was running back and forth, he was so excited, he pulled out his bass cord twice. And Louis was so nervous that his legs were shaking. I was the only one who was cool. I had the confidence. For me it was wonderful, even though I ripped through my cymbals. They just fell apart from hitting them so hard."

Carnegie Hall was followed quickly by a second gig, at the Fillmore East. Forced to sing and bash his drum kit over 350 watts of ear-bleeding, Sunn-sponsored amplification, Garner nearly wiped out mid-song. "On stage, I screamed so loud I almost blacked out," he remembers. "So I said: 'Whoa, I gotta take it easy here'. Being on stage was the best high I ever had. It was a musical high."

In terms of sheer sonic tonnage, Sir Lord Baltimore had very few peers. So it seemed like an obvious move to team them up with Brit doom-gods Black Sabbath for a US tour. Unfortunately, it did not end well.

John Garner: fired from the band he started.

"IF NOBODY TOOK DRUGS AND IF LOUIE WASN'T SUCH AN EGOMANIAC, WE COULD'VE BEEN RICH." John Garner

"So we went on tour with Black Sabbath. We went to the Virginia Dome. My manager made a deal with their manager to let us use their PA system. That was a big mistake. We were playing to over 6,000 people and we were doing a great job. And all of a sudden the power went out. Somebody pulled the plug. Then we started again. People were going crazy, they loved us. And they pulled the plug again. Three times they pulled the plug on us. Now, who knew people were gonna be that treacherous back then? We were into love, peace, and happiness. What's this shit? Unfortunately they came from Birmingham, and I guess they didn't have any manners. If we knew that, we would have hired some strong guys to sit by those plugs and beat the shit out of anybody who tried to pull 'em."

Amid all this madness, Sir Lord Baltimore managed to make it back into the studio and released another, self-titled album just a few months later. The second album was thicker, dustier, a drug-buzzy lurch that can easily be traced back as the patient-zero of stoner rock.

"Truthfully, it was," laughs Garner. "Because we were stoned a lot."

Since their inception, Sir Lord Baltimore were told they were five or 10 years ahead of their time. That's great for establishing a legacy, but terrible for paying bills. "People always told us that," Garner says. "Always. We were original, we didn't sound like anyone else, and we were always ahead of what was happening. That's great, but it's no help when you're trying to make some money as a band."

Compounding their troubles, Dambra and Garner ran into personality conflicts. Drugs didn't help matters any. "I mean, it could have been cool, you know," Garner laments. "If nobody took drugs and if Louie wasn't such an egomaniac, we could've been rich. All we had to do was stick together."

By the mid-1970s, Sir Lord Baltimore were limping along. The records didn't sell, the gigs were drying up, and the band was dysfunctional. They took one last stab at recording, in 1976, but the songs were left unfinished. And Garner was unceremoniously dropped from his own band.

"Mike Appel sat me down in his office and he said: 'You're always asking questions, you want to do this, you want to do that.' I said: 'Yeah, well what's wrong with that?' So he fired me. What he wanted was puppets. Gary and Louis fell right into that, because he was paying them to move out to California. The funny thing is, they started playing flamenco music. They had a timbale player. They sounded like Cat Stevens. I was like:, 'What the fuck happened?'"

And that, essentially, was that. Garner fitfully tried to revive the band over the ensuing decades, and in 2006 he finished off their mid-70s album, self-releasing it as *Sir Lord Baltimore III Raw*. He kept the bludgeoning riffola, but changed the lyrical content to reflect his Christian beliefs. "Basically, I said that heavy music has a lot of influence with its Satanisms and its vampirisms and its sewn-up mouths," he explains, "but what's heavier than the power of God?"

Over the decades Louis Dambra had also found religion, and became a pastor in Los Angeles. Despite their spiritual outlooks on life, neither has been able to resolve their differences.

"I don't talk to Louis any more," says Garner. "He's an asshole. He was hard to work with since the beginning. I mean, I didn't help by taking so many drugs, but still, it was a heartbreaker for me that we didn't get to make things happen while we were together."

Every Sir Lord Baltimore reissue released in the past few decades – and there have been many – are, Garner contends, bootlegs. Forty years later, he has still not made a dime for his efforts as a proto-metal shocktrooper. As the years wound on, he found himself playing sideman in perpetual up-and-comers The Lizards, managing wedding bands, and working for the New York Department of Sanitation. Not all of those years were great. Some were pocked with lean times and health scares. But for most of those years the tantalising possibility of a Sir Lord Baltimore reunion, a chance to right all wrongs, always loomed just over the horizon.

When the wedge between Garner and Dambra became too deep and profound, Garner was forced to face facts: Sir Lord Baltimore was over – for good. For years he quietly seethed, angry about the rip-offs, the hassles, the lost opportunities. But SLB's status as early-metal pioneers never wavered. The band's legend is cemented. Like The Stooges, the MC5, like Blue Cheer or the Velvet Underground, Sir Lord Baltimore will never be lame, never be tame, never be square, always be shockingly ahead of their time. And that matters, perhaps more than any fistful of peanuts the band might have acquired were their contracts in order.

It's taken some time, but Garner is finally ready to accept his role as the curator of Sir Lord Baltimore's legacy.

"I will admit I had some misgivings about it all," he says, "and I was angry about all the rip-offs. But it's true, I've got a legacy. So I got robbed. Big deal," he shrugs. "That's yesterday's paper, man." ●

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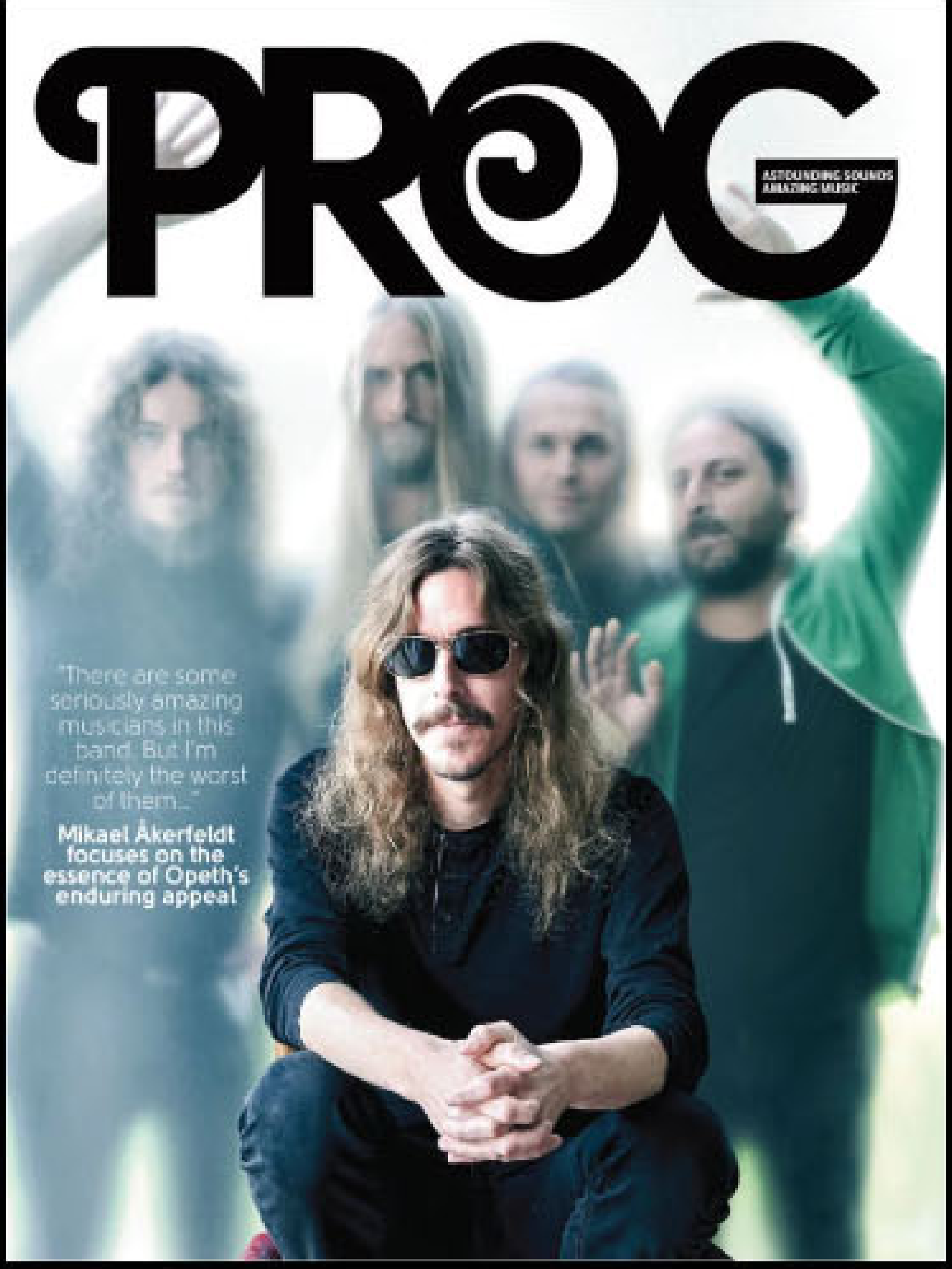
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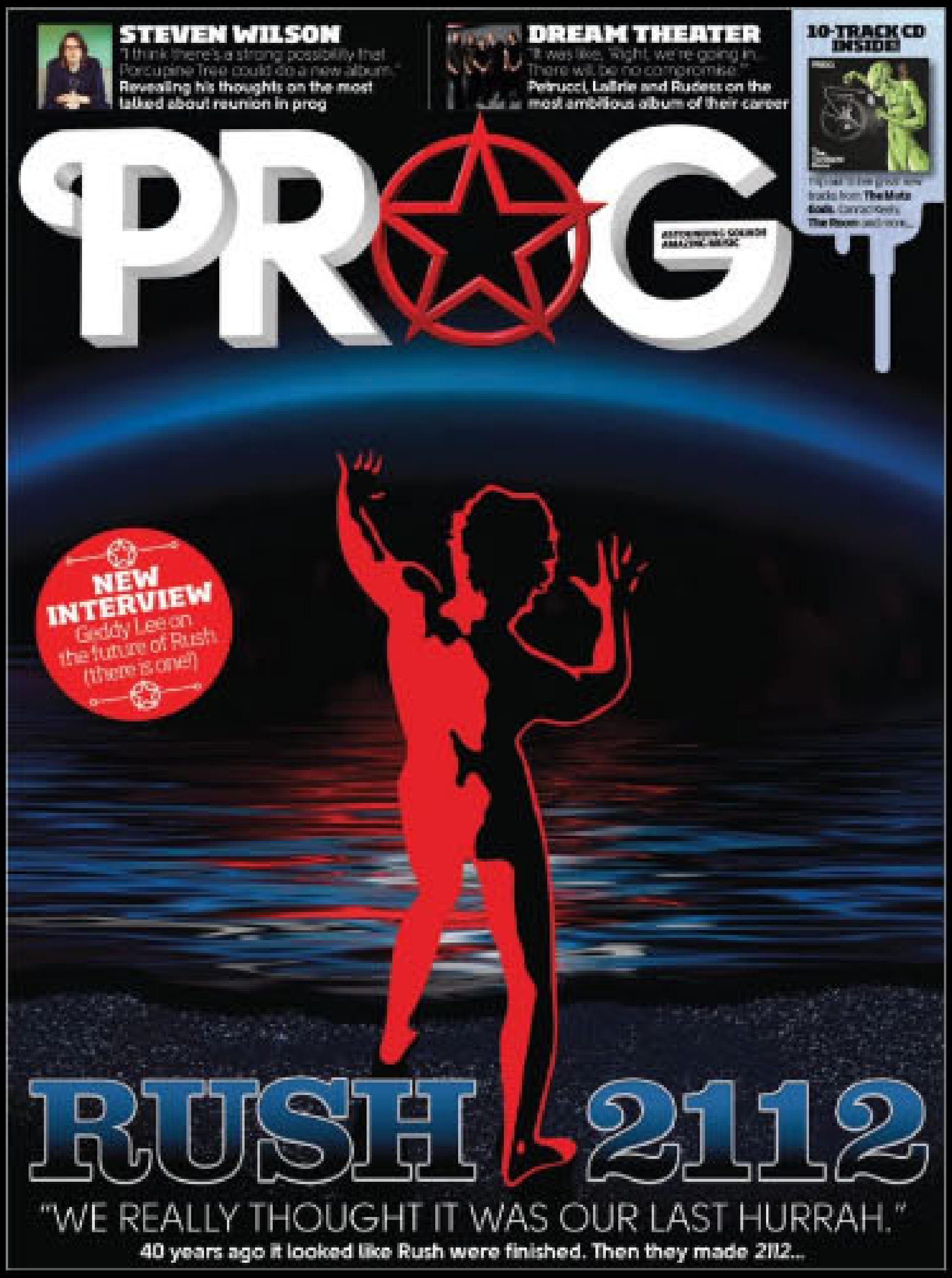
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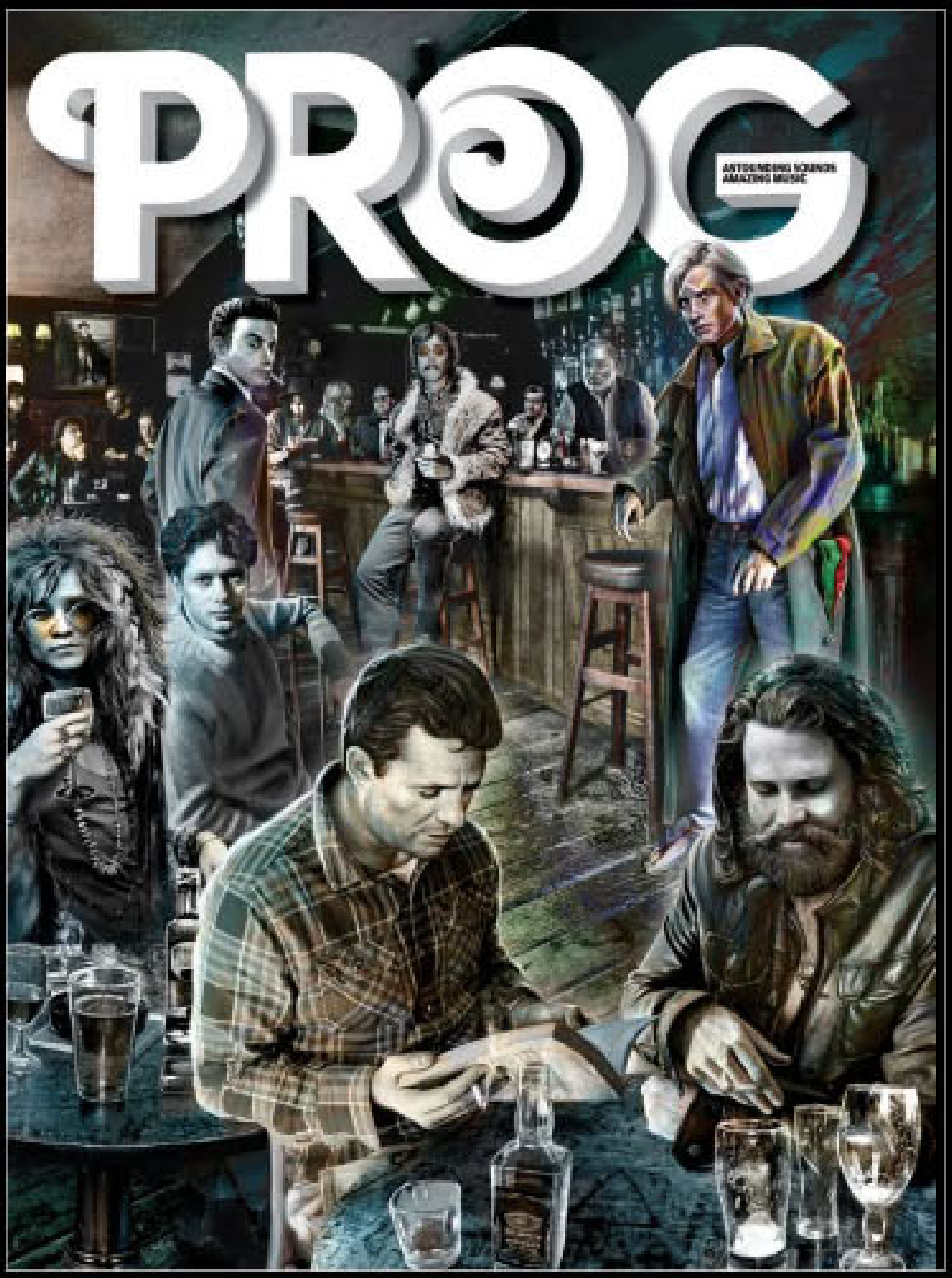
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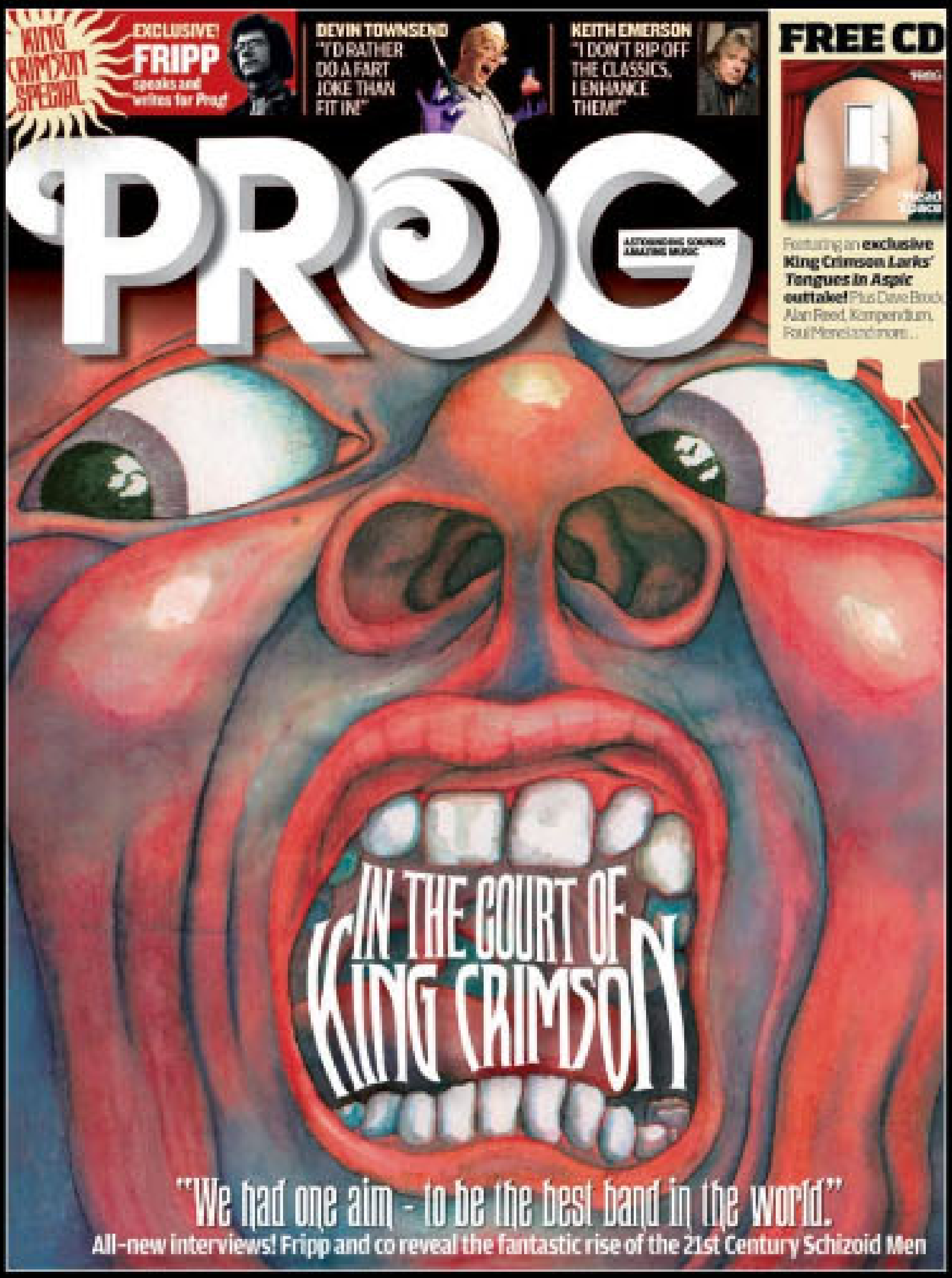
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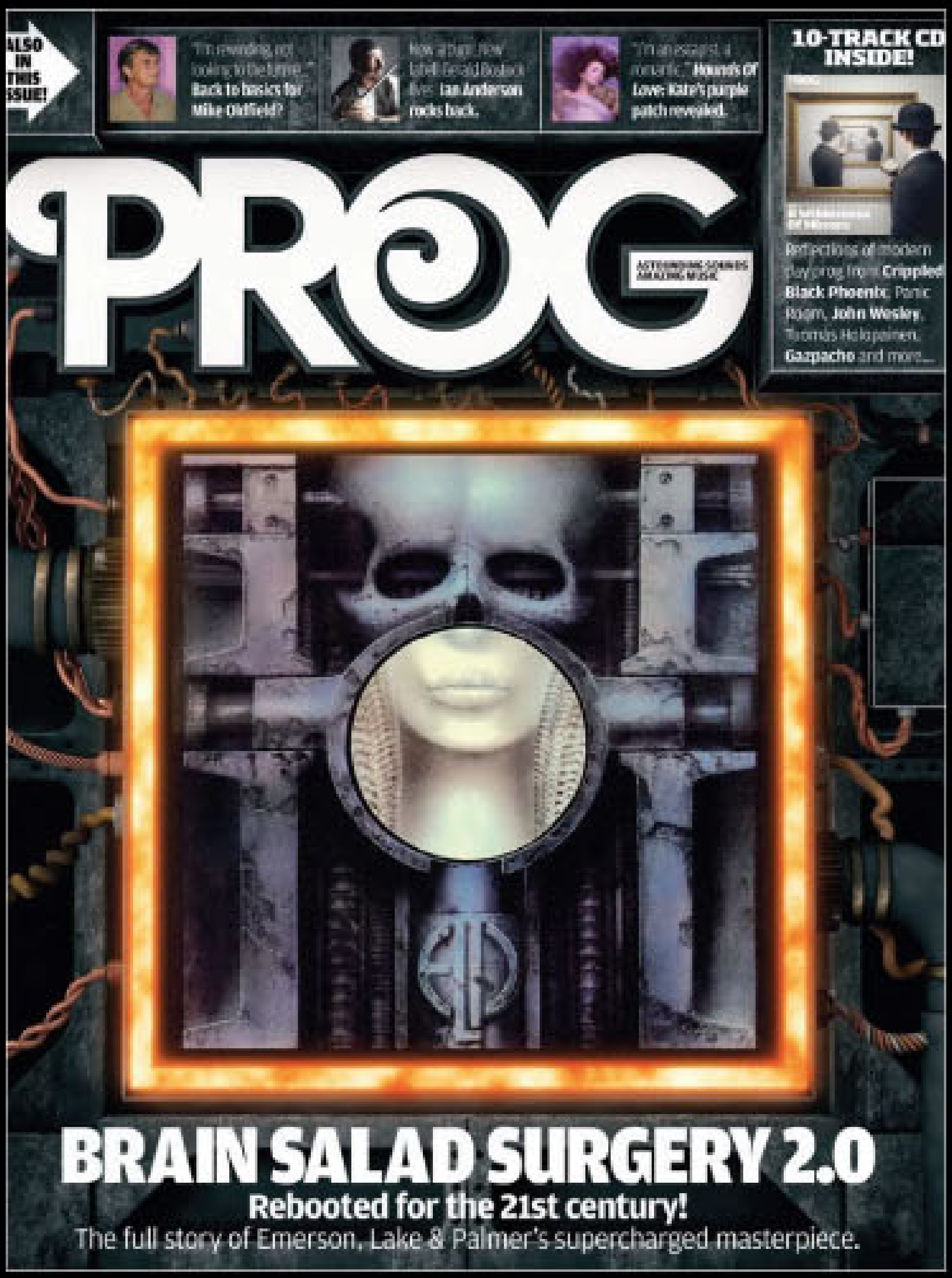
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The Wild Bunch

Having urged freedom rockers and those just *Born To Be Wild* to '*Get your motor runnin*'' for the past 40 years, John Kay explains why Steppenwolf are about to head out on the highway for the last time.

WORDS: SLEAZEGRINDER

"We're a hard rock band and we don't take shit from anybody. When we're on stage, that's our turf. And if you like what we do, welcome to the club. If you don't, don't bother us."

As the founder and frontman of the legendary Steppenwolf, John Kay has built an empire on used leather, high-octane gasoline, dirty blues, sweaty R&B and attitude. Yes, there's *Magic Carpet Ride* and *Born To Be Wild*, the latter a rallying cry of freedom to rockers and rule breakers the world over, but beyond the early hits and the brooding, bad-ass image there's 40 years' worth of stormy, politically charged rock'n'roll behind Kay's impenetrable black shades. Kay has endured countless band line-ups, treacherous record deals and even hostile takeovers in the past four decades, and from every adversity he's emerged stronger, tougher, as cunning as the lupine creatures of the night he so admires.

Now he's decided to end the saga with style, and will effectively break up Steppenwolf for good after a continent-hopping 40th anniversary tour this year. But first he looks back at the long and winding road that brought him here.

Kay was born and raised in Germany, where he first heard rock'n'roll on the Armed Forces broadcasts on his tinny FM radio in the 1950s. In 1958 his family moved to Toronto, Canada, and by the time he reached high school in the early 1960s he was already playing in bands. He joined The Sparrows in 1965. "We morphed into a blues-based raunchy rock'n'roll band after I joined," he says. "There was this kind of rich musical gumbo in the Toronto area. It had become an absolutely thriving scene that attracted thousands of kids from the suburbs every weekend, to the point where they had to seal off the streets when it got a little too weird."

Young, restless and wild, The Sparrows moved around a lot, from a stint in New York in the spring of 1966 to a life-changing emigration to the west coast later that year. "We loaded up the station wagon and the U-Haul and we headed out to LA," Kay recalls. "The Sunset scene was happening. We were playing the Troubadour, The Doors were playing down the street, various things were happening. Then the Sunset strip riots basically shut things down for a while, so we moved to San Francisco. We stayed there until the spring of 1967.

"During that period we became fully immersed in that scene there, which was very different, because those people were stretching out and experimenting with music. There was the psychedelic stuff, light shows at the Avalon, lots of drug use. We were part of – not as performers but as observers – of the first human Be-In, which was at Panhandler Park in January of 1967. And that was really the spark of the whole thing that later turned into the Summer Of Love of '67. So we were playing those ballrooms, at the Ark in Sausalito and the Matrix in San Francisco, with people like Steve Miller's blues band, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Janis Joplin, The Charlatans, the Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe And The Fish, lots of people making really interesting music.

"It was quite progressive and it had some influence on us, but we realised we were standing still. We had a band house, we were playing regularly and we were feeding ourselves, but we were treading water, and we figured with the record industry headquartered in LA we wanted to be there. We went back there and had a falling out. Shortly thereafter, Jerry

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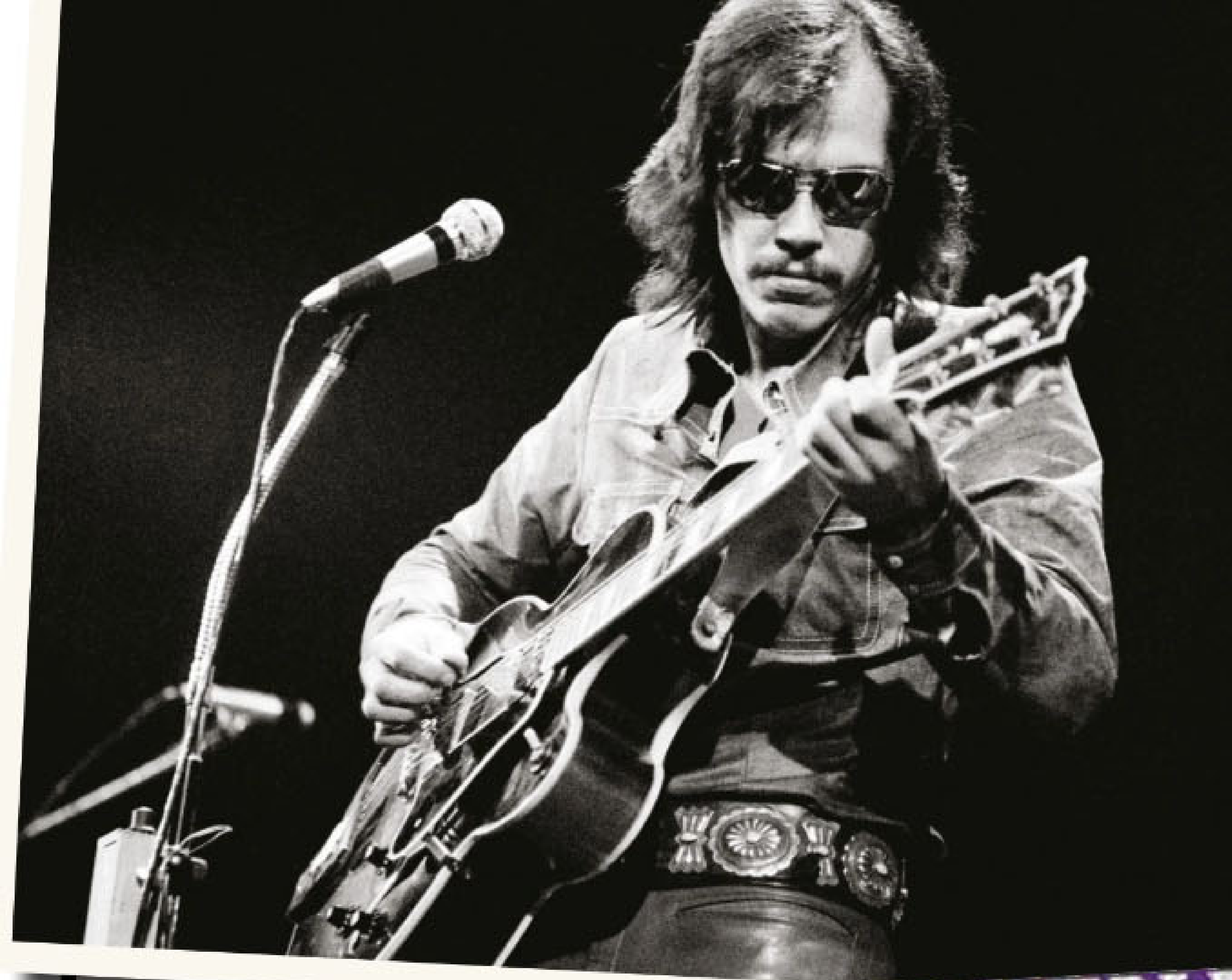

John Kay in full-on shades-'n'-leather rock star frontman mode.

Columbia Records Proudly Introduces The Sparrow Tomorrow's Ship c/w Isn't It Strange

STEPPENWOLF
THE SECOND
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Edmonton, who was the drummer in The Sparrows, Goldy McJohn, who was The Sparrows' keyboardist, myself and two fellas from LA [bassist Rushton Moreve and guitarist Michael Monarch] formed Steppenwolf in the summer of 1967."

The Sparrows were already a known quantity in town, so the new band scored a record deal with ABC-Dunhill with relative ease. They began recording almost immediately.

Steppenwolf's first, self-titled album was released in spring 1968. The album started getting extensive play on underground FM stations. Things really caught fire when the third single from it, *Born To Be Wild*, was released in the summer and the band got airplay on AM radio. From then on, "we were busy boys".

Born To Be Wild, Steppenwolf's most enduring hit, was written by the mysterious Mars Bonfire.

"Mars was the lead guitarist in The Sparrows, and he was also the brother of Jerry Edmonton," Kay explains. "At the time, Mars was still Dennis Edmonton. When The Sparrows busted up he went his own separate way. He wanted to become a songwriter and a solo artist. He changed his name to Mars Bonfire just because, well, it was a mysterious sort of name, something you wouldn't forget. He wrote *Born To Be Wild* because he had just gotten enough money to buy himself an American Motors Matador. It gave him a sense of independence and freedom, which inspired the song. Initially he was not fixated on motorcycles. It doesn't say anything about motorcycles on that song, it says '*Get your motor running*'. That could be anything. He was really talking about the age-old custom of American teenagers heading out to the highway to cause unrest. It was so right for the time, in terms of independence, a different way of life, alternative lifestyles, freedom from the supervision of their parents, so the song just connected with the adolescent rebellious spirit."

Born To Be Wild, along with the propulsive *The Pusher*, found itself on the soundtrack for movie *Easy Rider*, the quintessential counter-culture film of the 1960s, a hazy blur of motorbike existentialism starring Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and the death of the American dream.

"Nobody knew what the hell this thing was going to turn into," Kay says of the film. "We just thought it was a cool thing to be part of. Of course, it had an enormous ripple effect. It became an instant cult classic, and it's still running in many places around the world."

As well as immortalising *Born To Be Wild*, *Easy Rider* also made Steppenwolf an instant favourite of outlaws and hard-riders the world over.

"Yeah, *Born To Be Wild* more or less became the unofficial biker anthem, and still is to this day," Kay acknowledges. "But we had been dealing with the clubs even before that. The biker thing was strictly accidental, as were much of things going on with us. When The Sparrows were playing the Ark in Sausalito, a bunch of Hell's Angels walked in, all on acid. They came in, sat down, and eventually figured it was more comfortable to lay down on the dance floor and listen to us for three, four sets a night. And they would come pretty regularly. This was way before Altamont; most people then were very laid back. It was like, okay, he's a biker, he's not beating up on anybody, so who cares? Why can't I smoke a joint with him? It was that kind of a mind-set. It may have gone a long way to making people feel like: 'We're the outlaws and the outcasts of society and we're proud of it,' but the long-haired kids were also getting beat up by the beer-swilling college kids or some cowboy type, so we empathised with that – here's another group that's not getting the time of day from straight society."

> **"*Born To Be Wild* more or less became the unofficial biker anthem, and still is to this day."**
>
> **John Kay**

Steppenwolf's alliance with bikers continues to this day. "At this juncture, we have played biker events from Australia to Brazil to Finland, to Italy, Norway, Bucharest and many, many in between. The irony is that at none of those events do I recall any unrest or fights. There were even times I remember in Texas, they had Outlaws, Bandidos, groups that were not terribly fond of each other, but there was always an unspoken truce that when we're in this joint, we're here to see the man do *Born To Be Wild*, and nobody messed with that. On the one hand, we really appreciated their support and loyalty, on the other hand it would have been a real bummer if people who weren't involved in that thing had gotten beat up, and that was never the case."

With thousands of hairy an' scary outlaws on their side – to say nothing of the many more thousands of screaming young girls charmed by Kay's black leather or bass player Rushton Moreve's gyspy-pirate rags – Steppenwolf were well on their way. Two more albums were released in less than a year: 1968's *The Second*, featuring the band's second biggest hit, *Magic Carpet Ride*, and 1969's *At Your Birthday Party*. The band held a unique position in rock'n'roll at the time: they were loved by the squares *and* the heads. But their next album would prove, quite decisively, that they were on the side of the freaks.

In 1969 Steppenwolf released their most radical album, *Monster*. Angry and politically charged, it opens with the deceptively airy *Monster-Suicide-America*, a rambling, psyche-pop mind-bomb that expressed with nimble dexterity the daily anguish of life in the US during the Vietnam war. Songs like *Draft Resister* and *Fag* burned with a righteous anger a million miles away from the party-stomping bacchanalia of *Magic Carpet Ride*. The days of easy riding were definitely over. '*It's time to get our heads together*,' Kay sang on the bluesy rabble-rouser *Power Play*. '*Let 'em know we're awake*.'

"When we turned in the *Monster* album to our record company, they asked us where the hit single was," Kay remembers. "We said: 'It's not about a hit, you numbskulls. It's a political concept album.' So they looked at us and said: 'Well, okay, what do we do with it?' I said: 'Man, you take it college campuses.' So they did that."

The album yielded two Top 40 hits, including the 10-minute title song and the super-grooving *Move Over*. More importantly, it also struck a chord with the distraught and disenfranchised in those turbulent times. As Kay explains, *Monster*'s rebel yell still echoes even today.

"Sometimes you throw a pebble in the pond, but the ripple effect doesn't reach you for many years later", he says. "About a week ago somebody turned me on to the *Rolling Stone* website, where one of their writers was readdressing the *Monster* album, writing about how relevant it is now. At the same time, I get a call from the London *Observer* from a guy who's a war correspondent there. He was at our Royal Albert Hall show in the early 70s, and he's been a Wolf fan ever since. He told me the *Monster* album is what got him on his way. On the same day, I got a letter from this lawyer in the deep south. He tells me that the *Monster* album is what got him started, and he's been a lawyer for 25 years, representing the common man to fight against the bullies of the world. The gold records are fine, but there's a whole shoebox full of letters like that. And they mean more than any trophy."

Despite the lingering influence of *Monster*, the album was not the smash that

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The other great thing about Steppenwolf? They could all fit inside a shoebox.

previous records were, and the band's slow decline from the charts began. As Kay explains, the punishing recording and touring schedule the band had taken on four years previously was finally taking its toll.

"Once we caught our first wave of success, it was an intense, blurred period. Because we were so young and so unsophisticated, with respect to the recording industry, we signed a recording deal that really came out of the 1940s or 50s. When we signed the initial deal, we didn't have a pot to piss in. Some of our gear was in the hock shop, and there was no money for a lawyer and we didn't have any management yet. There were only two things that we insisted on. One was that we no longer had to release singles. We figured the time for singles was over. We wanted a guarantee that we could make an album, and that the label would release it. The other thing was that we needed $1,500 to get our amplifiers out of hock. So they said: "Okay, you can have that," and that was it.

"So basically, the contract said: 'You're going to deliver two albums a year.' That was based on some crooner being called into the studio twice a year. He's got an A&R man, he's picked the songs, he's learned the tunes, he's got the orchestra rehearsed, and three days later he's got an album. Well, these were the days when people were writing their own songs. We had to go out on the road to promote the album that was just released, then we had to go to Europe, come back to the US to do television, all this stuff. Two records a year was just an absurdity. Somewhere down the line, bands like The Eagles said: 'I don't care what the contract says, you're gonna get the album when it's ready.' But that was years later. For us, well, we signed this contract, and the label is pushing us, so we'd better get these two records out.

"It hurt us. We ran out of juice after a while. We should have waited. To some extant that was really the reason why in 1971 I said: 'Listen, guys. I want to put a stop to this. And I don't want to be responsible for everyone's livelihood. So if we want to retire the name and go our separate ways, I'm okay with that.' I was basically burned out. With hindsight, that could have been done much better; we could have had more enlightened management that would have stood up to the label, a lot of things. But I'm not complaining. There are worse things than what happened to us by a long shot. And nobody ran off to Ecuador with our money."

In 1971 Steppenwolf released the tepid album *For Ladies Only*, a lukewarm collection of warmed-over Wolf-boogie, and then limped to the finish line. "Our energies were elsewhere, and we were feeling very drained by the time we made that album," Kay says. "We were just not enthusiastic about what we were doing, so that diluted things."

The band announced their 'retirement' on Valentine's Day 1972. That retirement lasted just two short years. In 1974 Steppenwolf were back with the surprisingly invigorated *Slow Flux* album. It yielded one minor Top 40 hit, *Straight Shootin' Woman*. The time away from the public eye had hurt the band. But then so had fame.

"By the mid-1970s we were flying in private jets," Kay says. "We had the limousines, the saunas, the presidential suites and so forth. To some extent that removed us too much from the street-level thing that we were part of at the beginning. On the whole we were always a band of the people, for the people, by the people. In the long run I think that's a component for why we're still here. Because there was some sort of perceived integrity that withstood the test of time. In the early days we were very accessible, and hanging out with our fans was fine. Of course, after doing the Ed Sullivan show, and having songs on the charts, and the screaming young girls, well, things changed, and you could no longer do that because of security issues. After a while you also wanted privacy. But yeah, it changed how people looked at the band."

Steppenwolf released two more albums in the 70s: *Hour Of The Wolf* in 1975 and *Skullduggery* in 1976. While both had their share of blistering, bluesy hard rock, neither sold well, and the band decided to call it quits. John Kay put together a new band, and started touring as a solo act. And that was very nearly the end of the Steppenwolf story.

But by the late 1970s, a new Steppenwolf began stalking the dingier rock dives across the USA, a rag-tag pick-up band of ex-Kay cohorts the Steppenwolf founder derisively calls "Bogus Wolf". That rebel Steppenwolf was formed by

The psychedelic breakfast

As with any band allied with bikers, hellraisers, and rabble-rousers, Steppenwolf had their share of ugly rumours. One of the best claims that an unnamed member of the band was driven out by another member who'd spiked the unfortunate soul's breakfast cereal with LSD every day until he went quite mad. John Kay dispels the rumor. Sort of.

"There is a hint of truth in that," he says. "At one point – and I won't go into the details because I don't want to mention names – before Steppenwolf, there was a musician that we all liked and respected who was being approached about joining the band, since another member was leaving. He was invited to the west coast. And when he got there the whole flower power scene threatened the hell out of him. He came from a very conservative background, and so on.

"One of the then-Sparrow members, as the legend goes, made a futile effort to expand this fellow's consciousness and make him grasp the bliss that was waiting for him. He did apparently spike his coffee or something with some acid. The resultant trip, which was of course unexpected, unplanned and unwelcome, caused this guy to really go off the deep end. And after he came down, he was sent home. And believe me, he was not a happy camper."

John Kay (left) was the important constant in an otherwise revolving-door line-up.

ex-bandmate Nick St Nicholas, who had a long and storied history with Kay, stretching all the way back to The Sparrows.

"When we were in The Sparrows together, Nick was the guy who, more than anyone, applied himself to the advancement of the band," Kay explains. "He was always the one looking for a manager, looking for a record deal. And it was he who found one. He was instrumental, in an important way, to the survival of the band. And that's why we called him when Rushton went off the deep end. [Rushton Moreve, who died in an auto accident in 1981, was Steppenwolf's original bass player. He was fired in 1969 after his behavior became erratic.] He followed this cult that believed that California was gonna fall in the ocean," Kay says. "He didn't show up for engagements, so we had to replace him. We all thought that Nick busted his balls trying to get The Sparrow happening, so maybe he deserves a shot. So we called him up."

St Nicholas joined Steppenwolf in 1969 and stayed with the band until 1971. "Unfortunately, some years after, Nick went off the deep end as well and started doing some weird shit, like wearing bunny ears and jock-straps on stage. So we had to replace him as well." Kay laughs. "But he's still the guy that tried to get The Sparrows on the map, and nobody should take that away from him."

St Nicholas, along with original Steppenwolf guitarist Michael Monarch, is now a member of the World Classic Rockers, a revolving-door supergroup that also boasts ex-members of Journey, Santana, The Eagles, Toto and Lynyrd Skynyrd. But in the late 1970s St Nicholas and original Steppenwolf keyboardist Goldy McJohn had other plans.

"So, Nick had been fired from the band years before, as had Goldy. Some agent got a hold of them, or vice versa, and said: 'Well, John doesn't have a Steppenwolf out there, and you two were in the band, so why can't you use the name?'"

Kay and Jerry Edmonton were actually the owners of the Steppenwolf name, but Kay still found himself embroiled in a frustrating legal dispute, unable to stop the bogus Wolf from operating.

"There were corporate records out there over who owned the name, but the documents were not as well attended to by the highly paid attorneys we had working on our behalf. Whatever the reason, it caused us to not have the legal basis to stand up in court with a clear-cut case. So they went out and toured while this legal battle was going on.

"By this time," Kay says, "we had gotten letters that said: 'What was that? I went to see this Steppenwolf and they were awful! People were throwing drinks at them!' I figured by the time these guys get pushed out of the business, if ever, the way things are going with injunctions and appeals, any credibility the name had will be gone. I'd had it. I talked to Jerry and said: 'Look, are you okay with me going out as John Kay And Steppenwolf with these guys I've been playing with to distinguish this version from the bogus Wolf? He said fine, and we worked something out financially. So we headed out. But in 1980 we had to pick up the name in the toilets of the secondary markets and third-rate bars. It was horrible what had been done with the name."

Things looked bleak, but Kay's band were up for the challenge.

"The new band had a tremendous work ethic," he says. "The idea was, we kicked ass tonight, and they will spread the word. That was our hope, and that is in fact what happened. We worked our way out of the really small shitty clubs into the larger shitty clubs, and from there, eventually to the big clubs, the good clubs, into the theatres and the ampitheatres and back into the arenas. But that took years. Along the way we learned to make everything work in-house. At the beginning there was nobody there for us, because there was no money to be made off of us. So we had to provide our own vans, our own gear, hire roadies and technicians as we could afford them. We went from that to a motor home, and from that to a bus, from a cube van to a 40-foot truck. In each instance there were these incremental steps, until by1987 we came up for air, looked around and said: 'Jesus Christ, we're going full-bore. We've got a career, we've got income, we're having fun on stage, we're releasing new product,' and so on. That's the legacy. As miserable and as soul-wrenching as it was at times to deal that with bogus band and the destruction of our reputation, when we had managed to scrape the shit off our shoes, and wound up playing for 60,000 people at Farm Aid, it was one of those times when you said: 'Well, it was a long hard haul, but we've finally regained our independence.'

It would be easy to paint Nick St Nicholas as the Judas in the Steppenwolf story, the grand schemer who nearly did in the band's long and noble legacy, but Kay's views on his old bandmate have softened over time ("It's water under the bridge. I wish him well"). Besides, Kay can afford benevolence now. Steppenwolf's gradual resurrection ultimately resulted in Wolf World, a 145-acre spread in Tennessee with a private lake, a recording studio, a bus, a barn, a merchandising company and more. "I've always been a firm believer in minding the store and being prepared," Kay offers. "I've always felt no one's going to care about what affects you more than you do, so pay attention."

He also cites teamwork as an important component in Steppenwolf's success.

"All of this – the bus, the 105 cases of gear, the publishing company, the recording studio – obviously it's rooted in the ability to find people for our SWAT team of rock'n'roll who really cared about this, for whom Steppenwolf was more than a band with a couple of hits. Most people in our organisation wear more than

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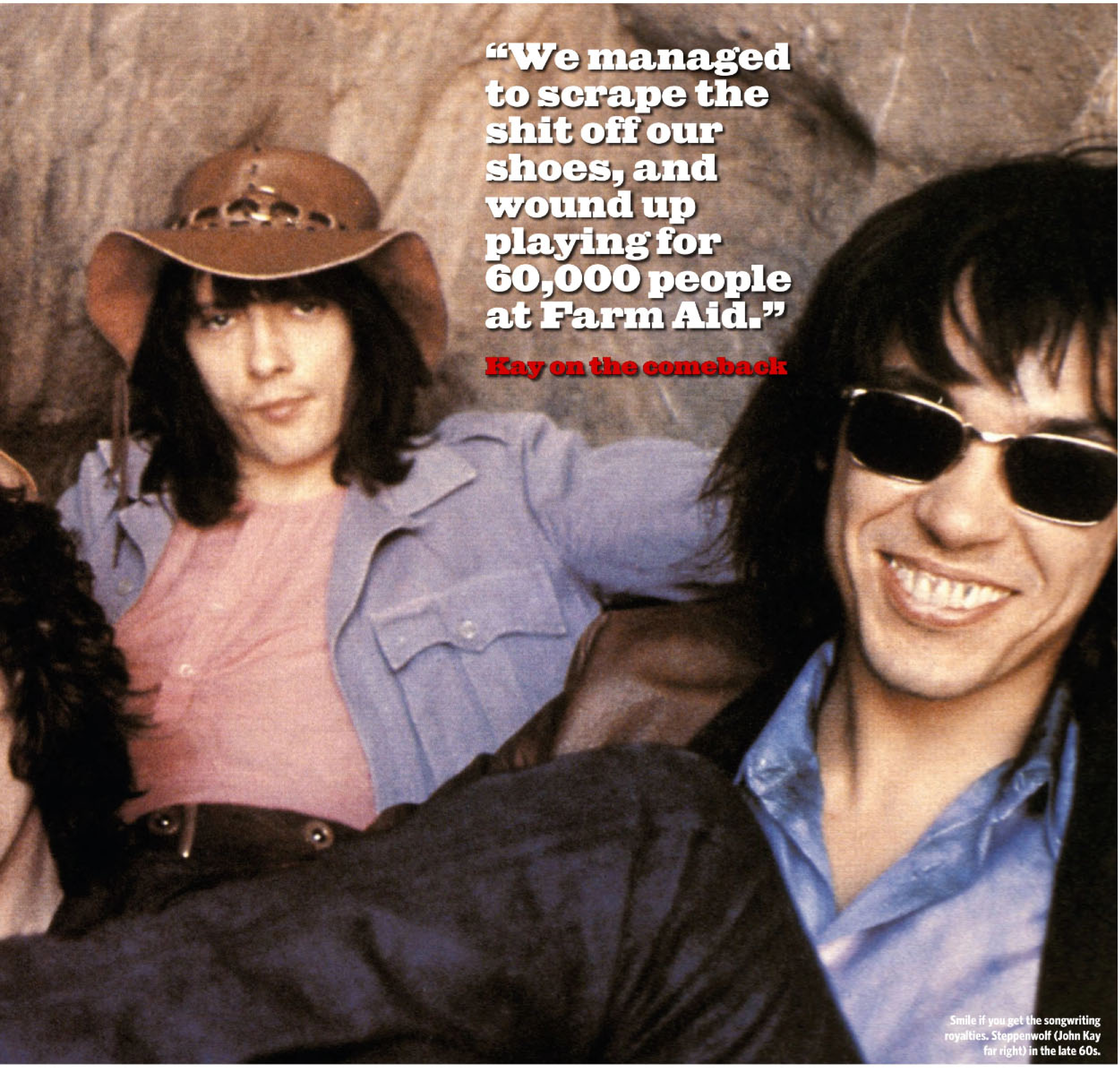


"We managed to scrape the shit off our shoes, and wound up playing for 60,000 people at Farm Aid."

Kay on the comeback

Smile if you get the songwriting royalties. Steppenwolf (John Kay far right) in the late 60s.

one hat. Our tour manager also runs our fan club. Our keyboard player is also our computer programmer and my co-songwriter. So everyone pitched in, and as a consequence we grew. To be able to make something like this last this long, to just hang in there, to persevere and thrive, I think that's an incredible achievement."

And thrive they have. In the past decade the band have played to increasingly larger audiences – often bigger than those of the band's 70s heyday.

"We have a following that's very loyal, very intense and it's growing. Once we started seeing 14-year-old faces in front of the stage, all the way back to their parents' age, we realised that we had sent the message: yes, we have hits, and we love playing them, but we have new songs, and we aren't going to become stale. We're always going to alternate new songs with familiar ones, and we're going to get them accustomed to that idea, and it should work. And it did. Eventually we started to record at my own studio, and we licensed the albums to various labels internationally. So it's been never boring."

So why quit now?

"I don't want to give people the impression that we're falling off the edge of the world," Kay replies. "We have been a touring band for 40 years, and I don't see myself playing the 30-40 dates again that we'll play this year. But we have this wildlife foundation, and who knows, maybe 18 months from now, if there's a couple of events for it, I may do that. I'm certainly intending to play a handful of blues festivals as a solo act, doing the kind of stuff I've done since I was a guy with a guitar in my hand hitch-hiking across America. So music will continue to be something that I will be involved in. But as far as Steppenwolf's annual trek across America, that is definitely coming to an end this year."

Wolf World will still stand, of course, although Kay has since moved to Vancouver, where he and his wife will focus on their work with the Maue Kay foundation, a non-profit group that provides financial assistance to people working to protect wildlife, the natural environment and human rights.

As for the long and winding legacy of Steppenwolf, Kay has no regrets.

"Fairly early on, even back in Germany during World War II, it became abundantly clear to me that the sort of by-the-book middle-class existence, I just could not see myself in that world.

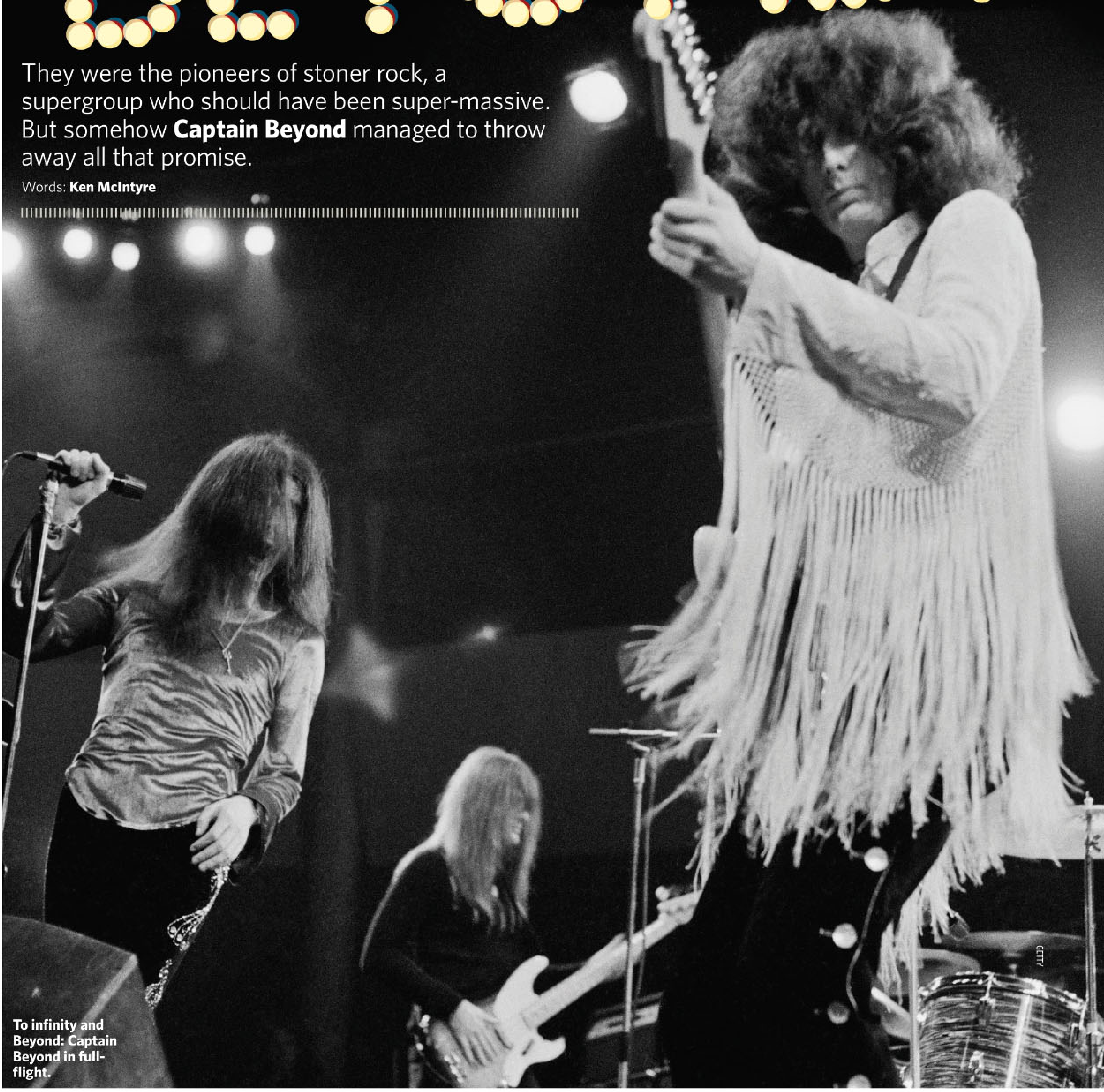
"When the music came along, it was basically Little Richard who started it all for me. I realised that, for the first time, I had stumbled upon something that really ignited some sort of inner spark in me. And it went on from there.

A few years later, as luck would have it, things turned out quite well. When I look over my shoulder to the beginning of all this, I think of times on stage when it was really clicking, when it was really optimum, and you really did not want to be anyone else or anywhere else. You were in the here and now. And that's as good as it gets."

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND!

They were the pioneers of stoner rock, a supergroup who should have been super-massive. But somehow **Captain Beyond** managed to throw away all that promise.

Words: **Ken McIntyre**



GETTY

To infinity and Beyond: Captain Beyond in full-flight.

Rock'n'roll has many well-kept secrets, some dirty, some amazing, many both at once. It's one of the genre's most enduring and endearing traits. One of its greatest hidden treasures is a scruffy neo-supergroup from the dawn of the 1970s called Captain Beyond. Formed in the wake of Iron Butterfly's sudden and premature demise in 1971, Captain Beyond captured perfectly the zeitgeist of the era, wrapping their Technicolor freak-flag around the Butterfly's grungy, stoner metal, layering their dense caveman-thud with far-out spurts of space-prog and throbbing tribal grooves. It was hard rock, for sure, born of thunder and sweat, but it was weird and cosmic, too. Think head shops and UFO cults and you've got it.

Captain Beyond were wily wizards gnawing on dinosaur bones in the waning days of the Age of Aquarius. It's not surprising that Larry 'Rhino' Reinhardt is the only person that's been part of Captain Beyond since the band formed. It was, after all, named after him.

"We were on tour in Europe with Iron Butterfly," Reinhardt explains, sitting at home in Florida. "Butterfly and Yes were on the same bus. After a real long night with a pipe – we all partook in some attitude adjustment for the long ride – I was coming out of the bus, and Chris Squire from Yes looked at my blood-red eyes and said: 'Goddamn, you look like Captain Beyond!' The name stuck with me ever since."

Reinhardt joined proto-metal warriors Iron Butterfly for their 1970 album *Metamorphosis.* He was also with them on a European tour to support the album.

"We were riding high, the European audiences were loving the new band. We were just tearing people's heads off, and we were all saying: "We've really go to do another album." But then Doug [Ingle, Iron Butterfly's original singer] called a meeting, and so we went down there. As I remember it, there were a couple of groupies, and he was having a cocktail, and there were crosses all over the room. He was a preacher's son, and I think he had a revelation or something. He said: "Guys, I can't go on any more. I can't take this rock'n'roll life with all the women and the drinking." And I'm looking at him having a gin and tonic with two broads sitting next to him while he's telling me this. I was in shock. I just couldn't believe it. I was like, this band is about to make a big, new splash, and you quit? We couldn't do Butterfly without his voice. He flushed the toilet on us."

After Butterfly ended, Reinhardt and Butterfly bassist Lee Dorman decided to continue playing together on a new project. Reinhardt called on an old friend to join them – drummer Bobby Caldwell. Caldwell and Reinhardt had played in rival garage bands in Florida in the late 60s. Caldwell later played with the Allman Brothers and with Johnny Winter's band. He was still touring with Winter when he heard from the renegade Butterflies.

"They asked me if I wanted to get together. And I had been sitting on this idea since playing with the Allman Brothers. I wanted to do this different kind of music. I wanted to do something that was almost extreme but would also have real songs, just with different kinds of time signatures and arrangements. I'd been thinking about this for a long time, I just didn't know if I could find the people to do it. So, I got this call from those guys. At the time, I was playing with Johnny and I was very happy. But then Johnny said he wanted to take a hiatus after being burned out from three years of very heavy touring. When that happened I flew to LA, and the three of us got together. And then Rod came in after that."

Rod Evans was a founding member of Deep Purple, and sang on one of their biggest early hits, *Hush.* In 1969, Purple decided they needed a heavier sound, and so Evans was ousted from the band in favour of the leather-lunged Ian Gillan.

Looking for bright new horizons, Evans moved to Los Angeles. He soon found himself jamming with Captain Beyond. The results, according to Reinhardt, were both magical and miserable.

"Rod had a great voice and a great singing style," he remembers. "Unfortunately he also had mental problems. He quit the band four times before we ever even hit the road."

Although Caldwell confirms Evans's fight-or-flight behaviour, he doesn't agree with Rhino's assessment of his old singer's mental status.

"Rhino's right, he did quit a few times," Caldwell says, "but I don't think his behaviour had anything to do with mental problems. Rod was very insecure about his abilities, so any little thing would make him feel like maybe he wasn't up to the job. That's not very uncommon for people in the arts. As to what his insecurities were attributed to, I couldn't tell you. All I can say is he was a great singer."

> **"Rod Evans had a great voice but he quit the band four times before we even hit the road."**
> **Larry 'Rhino' Reinhardt**

Strained relationships within the band weren't Captain Beyond's only problems. Their first, self-titled album was a masterpiece of sophisticated aggression, part dope-rock thuggery, part limber, prog-baiting space-metal. It sold well, and the band gigged relentlessly, including a full-scale tour with the Alice Cooper band. But somewhere along the way, Beyond's record label, Capricorn, had a sudden change of heart. According to Reinhardt, by the time the band starting working on their follow-up album, labelmates the Allman Brothers had broken big, and Capricorn wanted Captain Beyond to explore their southern side. Unfortunately they didn't have one.

"We were in all the magazines – *Rolling Stone, Billboard,* all of that. Our record was in the charts and we were on the radio, but our record company just wasn't behind us," Reinhardt says. "They wanted us to change, to be more like them. We said: 'You signed a blonde and now you want a brunette? We're sorry, but we can't just get a bottle of dye and change our hair colour.' That pissed them off, and that was the beginning of the end.

"They did everything they could to destroy us after that. That's why, I think, we were like this sort of secret, cult band. They did stuff like put us on tours that were absolutely absurd, like Sha Na Na – they were headlining, we were the opening act. Does that sound good to you?

"We were playing in New York, in Central Park. It was like the Republicans and the Democrats, like going to Congress. When we were on, the Sha ◆▸

Captains of the ship: (back) Lee Dorman, (front, l-r) Bobby Caldwell, Rod Evans, Larry 'Rhino' Reinhardt.

Na Na side of the crowd started throwing vegetables.

"They were throwing tomatoes, bananas and grapes at us, and we were trying to dodge all this shit. And then we got into the swing of it and we started to throw the vegetables back at them.

"And then the crowd started throwing stuff at each other. It just became a huge food fight. We called that one the Fruit And Vegetable Festival. It was just crazy. By the end of it we just started booking our own gigs, and the guy who owned the label was threatening to fly out and beat our asses.

"I offered to meet him halfway so we could get it over with quicker."

"I don't remember it going down like that," says Caldwell, who agrees that things got decidedly weird with Capricorn, but believes the reasons were less sinister, and more typical 70s rock bullshit: mis-management and recreational drug use.

"What I remember is that we started having problems because our manager was also the head of the record label. It was a mistake. If your manager and the head of your record company is the same person, you can't bring your grievances to either one.

"Also, there was so much… 'stimulation', let's say, going on with the people at Capricorn, that they'd get on the phone, and any little thing could set them off. Phil [Walden, Capricorn head] threatened to kill Rhino, he threatened to kill Lee.

"There was this level of aggression going on, and things slowly started to deteriorate. I don't remember it having anything to do with us playing southern rock, though. That wasn't even on the cards."

In 1973 the beleaguered band released their second album, *Sufficiently Breathless*. Combining the band's penchant for spaced-out hard rock with a sudden affection for Latin percussion, the record is one odd duck indeed. A flop at the time it was released, the album eventually found its fans. Bobby Caldwell, who left the band before it was recorded, is not one of them.

> **"Rhino turned the band into an all-gay Latin revue, or whatever it was."**
>
> **Bobby Caldwell on CB's second album**

"Around the end of 1972 there seemed to be a division in the band," Caldwell says. "Lee and Rhino were on one side, Rod was sort of standing in the middle and I was on the other. And it was really probably about nothing important, just some childhood ego things or something. But we were really butting heads about something. And I remember saying: 'Look, we're right at the door of major stardom.' I knew we were going to break huge. I said: 'All we have to do is keep doing what we're doing. All we have to do is keep writing creative stuff.' But there was some kind of opposition mounting that was against that. So I finally said: 'Fine. Fuck it. I'm leaving.' And I did. And that's where you got the second album. Rhino found some new guys who would listen to him, and he turned the band into an all-gay Latin revue, or whatever it was [laughs]. If it was a great album, I would say it was. But it wasn't. And it wasn't Captain Beyond. It went nowhere.

"About seven months later, they gave me a call. I had just replaced Carmine Appice in Cactus, but I reconciled with the guys and we got back together, although I was very wary about the whole deal at this point."

The band carried on, but Evans soon left the fold. To this day, neither Rhino nor Caldwell knows exactly why.

"We were getting ready to start the next album. It was just after Christmas, and Rod called a meeting and told us he was leaving the band," Caldwell remembers. "There was no obvious underlying problems that we knew of for why he was quitting. It might have been his insecurities again, or because he had met a girl and maybe he didn't want to leave her to go out on the road. Or maybe he was just outgrowing the band. I still don't really know."

With Evans's departure, the band began holding auditions for a new singer – future Journey frontman Steve Perry was one of the many who ended up on the rejected pile – before they decided on a relative unknown, Willie Daffern.

In 1977, after several years of dealing with an indifferent record label and slowly building a cult of loyal listeners, the newly shuffled Captain Beyond released their third and final album, *Dawn Explosion*. Weird and wonderful, its comic-book prog-metal and ethereal space-streaking found the band in fine, freaky form. Unfortunately, they

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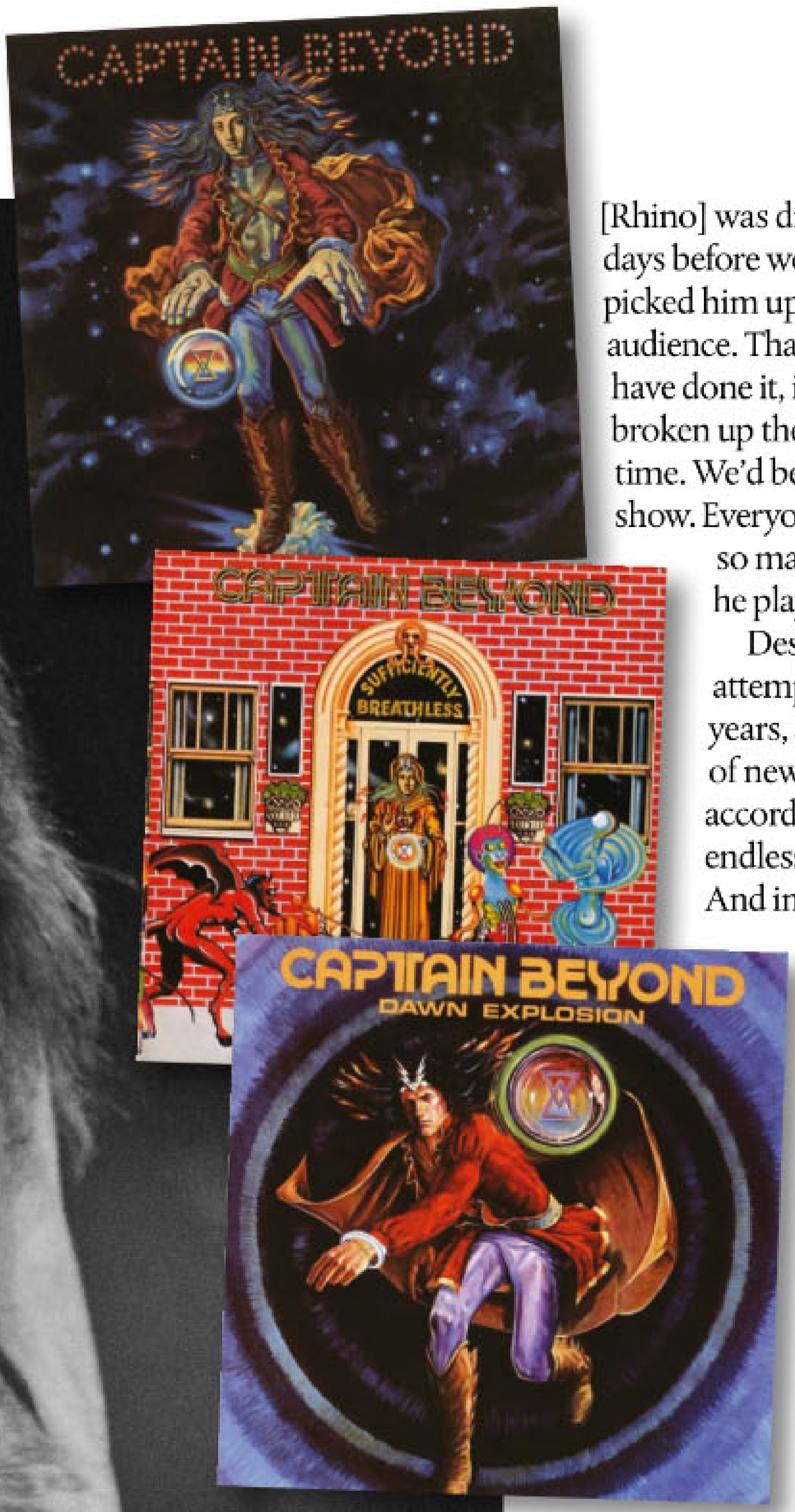
Rod Evans: "very insecure about his abilities," says Bobby Caldwell.



dissolved not long after the record hit the shelves.

"We were just starting to get somewhere – again," sighs Rhino. "And then our singer, Willie, decided he wanted to go solo. And that was it. We kept trying to get it back together again but it just wouldn't fly."

"If I was just a drummer, and not a songwriter," says Caldwell, I probably would have cared a lot less about Captain Beyond breaking up. But I still feel like if we had just kept the band together we could have been huge. I mean, the band was already getting big. When we played Chicago it was like Led Zeppelin was playing there. That's the kind of adulation that was going on. It was all there for us to take. We had the magic to make it all happen. We had the right songs and we had the right people, but we had the wrong manager and the wrong record company."

With Captain Beyond on indefinite hiatus, Rhino decided to give some old friends a call.

"We got the original Iron Butterfly back together and went on tour. But by that point Doug was a completely different person. He'd pass out behind the keyboards, and suddenly you'd just hear 'BRRRRRRRRRRR', because he was laying on the keys. So that didn't last. And then I didn't play for about 10 years after that, because my hand almost got cut off. I fell out of a building doing security work. I fell about 30 feet. I went through two floors before I hit a bunch of boxes of wire. I didn't even feel anything at first, but I was covered in blood, so I knew that wasn't good. It cut two tendons in half on my left hand and almost cut a third one. They put 120 stitches in my hand. I used to cry. I'd pick up a guitar and I couldn't even play a chord."

Things went more smoothly for Caldwell. While on his first hiatus with Captain Beyond, the journeyman drummer joined Rick Derringer's band, and played on his seminal *All American Boy* album. Caldwell later joined the short-lived Brit-rock supergroup Armageddon with former Yardbirds and Renaissance frontman Keith Relf.

Still, neither Rhino nor Caldwell felt like the Captain Beyond story was quite finished, especially since the band's reputation as the godfathers of stoner rock continued to grow over the decades. And so, in the late 1990s, the band gave it one final try. Unfortunately they went out with a fizzle, not a bang.

"When Rhino contacted me about getting Beyond back together, I wasn't too enthusiastic about it," says Caldwell. "It didn't seem like a very good idea. But I did try to get in touch with the other guys.

"I asked Lee, but he never called me back. There was something going on with Rod and Rhino, and Rod just didn't want to deal with him. So, we had to get some new guys. We got a bar singer, and a bar bass player, and a guy on keyboards who thought he was Keith Emerson."

This motley crew rolled into Sweden for the 1999 Sweden Rock Festival. But, despite a ravenous press and surprisingly warm and enthusiastic welcome, this potentially career-defining gig turned out to be a disaster.

"We didn't play well," sighs Reinhardt. "We couldn't communicate with the sound guy. And amps kept blowing up."

Caldwell remembers it differently: "Larry [Rhino] was drunk. He drank for two straight days before we even got out there. I could've picked him up and thrown him into the audience. That's how mad I was. And I would have done it, if I didn't think it would have broken up the band, as feeble as it was at the time. We'd been rehearsing for months for this show. Everyone was disappointed. There were so many people out there to see us, and he played so shitty, it was just a joke."

Despite this major misstep, the band attempted to carry on for the next few years, and even released a four-track EP of new material in 2000. However, according to Caldwell it had become an endless struggle to keep things going. And in 2001 Captain Beyond played their final show together.

"We played a gig in the fall of 2001," Caldwell remembers. "The place was sold out. It was in Clearwater, Florida. The people were packed in there and everybody seemed to be pleased. And then I didn't hear from Rhino for two-and-a-half years after that. That was basically it."

Bobby Caldwell still plays with his own band in Florida. As does Rhino Reinhardt. In fact after a long bout with liver cancer – and an exceedingly morbid 2009 solo album, *Rhino's Last Dance*, for which Reinhardt sang his lines while wearing an oxygen mask – Captain Beyond's guitar slinger has recently released a second (and decidedly more optimistic) solo album, *Back In The Day* (available from www.rldrecords.com). Assembling a crack band of local legends – most of the players on the record spent the last few years playing with former Allman Brothers guitarist Dickey Betts – Rhino's resurrection album is a raucous wallop of southern-fried slabbage that touches on every aspect of his long and winding career, from Iron Butterfly's sonic battering to Captain Beyond's cosmic riffery to the gutbucket blooze that started Rhino on his musical path so many decades ago.

"It's a bit of everything that I've done over the years," he says. "The basic concept was playing music from my roots, going back in the day to the way things were, but with a modern edge."

As for Captain Beyond, it appears that the good captain has launched his last cosmic voyage. Luckily, though, he is survived by countless young, long-haired, sufficiently breathless riff-addicts who have taken, and continue to take, inspiration from the band's thunderous astro-prog.

"Captain Beyond is an acquired taste," Caldwell admits. "But I'm telling you, when we were in Sweden for the Sweden Rock Festival, so many people were trying to talk to us that I thought maybe they had us confused with the Rolling Stones or something.

"Not that I haven't had my share of people who want an autograph or to shake my hand, but in Sweden there was just so many of them. It's still a worldwide phenomenon. To this day, Captain Beyond are still respected by listeners and by musicians." ❶

THE SONGS THAT FORGED

METAL

1964-1976

Some of the classic touchstones – and obscure gems – that changed heavy music

Words: Lee Dorrian, Monte Conner, Sleazegrinder, Scott Rowley

Atomic Rooster pose for the Littlewoods catalogue, 1970.

THE CRUSHER

THE NOVAS *(1964)*

This relentless slab of garage surf rock from 1964 is an ode to 50s American wrestling legend Crusher Lisowski. Vocalist Bob Nolan puts in such an OTT performance that it literally pre-dates death metal vocalists by some 20-plus years.

YOU REALLY GOT ME

THE KINKS *(1964)*

Up to this point had there been a rock riff so direct and in your face as *You Really Got Me?* Well, maybe there was, but it's hard to think of one.

FOXY LADY

JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE *(1967)*

Stoned, heavy and seriously groovy, Hendrix's *Foxy Lady* is cool as hell from top to tail.

DEFECTING GREY

PRETTY THINGS *(1967)*

Former R&B legends' first real attempt at being experimental is a mind-bending formula of head-trips and exploding distorted guitar riffs.

BUZZSAW

THE TURTLES *(1968)*

Hard to imagine that the band who had an earlier worldwide smash hit with *Happy Together* were also responsible for this ultra-groovy, heavy fuzz monster of a tune.

SUMMERTIME BLUES

BLUE CHEER *(1968)*

Considered by many to be the first heavy metal record, their debut album *Vincebus Eruptum* blew minds and battered senses with an incendiary overload of crashing drums and blistering feedback. This earthquake-inducing re-working of the Eddie Cochran classic simply cannot be ignored in the history of the heavier side of rock music.

IN-A-GADDA-DA-VIDA

IRON BUTTERFLY *(1968)*

The 17-minute epic that's often acknowledged as the first real metal track, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*'s mysterious title came about when singer Doug Ingle slurred the intended lyrics *'In the Garden of Eden'* while out of his mind on red wine. The band thought it sounded better that way, and proceeded to turn it into a world-changing psychfest of 'incessant twin guitars and gorilla-fingered organ plunking'.

Budgie: bludgeoning.

BORN TO BE WILD

STEPPENWOLF (1968)

The first crack of heavy metal thunder? Steppenwolf's first hit was written by guitarist Mars Bonfire (aka Dennis Edmonton), inspired by the freedom offered by a new motorbike and its inclusion on the soundtrack for movie *Easy Rider* made it the quintessential biker anthem. The line about *'heavy metal thunder'* marks the phrase's first appearance in a rock lyric. It wouldn't be the last.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

LED ZEPPELIN (1969)

The first song on Zeppelin's first album, released the first month of 1969, *Communication Breakdown*'s relentless stomp almost certainly directly influenced Sabbath's *Paranoid* single (which volts *Breakdown*'s verse on to the riff from *Dazed And Confused*, like some metal cut'n'shut) and announced the arrival of a new force in heavy music. Johnny Ramone later claimed that he learned guitar by playing along with the track. The rapid downstrokes on *Communication Breakdown* became a signature of his playing and influenced a later generation of metal bands.

MAGIC POTION

THE OPEN MIND *(1969)*

The Open Mind were one of the very first bands to inject blasting double-bass drums into a hard-rocking, early metal style. Their seriously rare self-titled 1968 album is slightly more whimsical and dreamy than this hard-edged UK psych 45.

FUTILIST'S LAMENT

HIGH TIDE *(1969)*

Punishing raw guitar and swirling effects make the stomach curdle and the head spin on this ultra-heavy dark-psych masterpiece.

FACTORY GRIME

CRUSHED BUTLER *(1970)*

Coming across like a UK Blue Cheer formed on a council estate, *Factory Grime* is a gloriously gritty, pre-punk grinder of a tune.

D.O.A.

BLOODROCK *(1970)*

An eight and a half minute downer that *Classic Rock* once called "the darkest moment of 70s rock", *D.O.A*. narrates the closing moments of someone's life, while a funeral organ broods and an ambulance siren sounds over lyrics like: *'The sheets are red and moist where I'm lying God in heaven, teach me how to die.'* A real-life horror film set to music.

MASTER HEARTACHE

SIR LORD BALTIMORE *(1970)*

Drummer/vocalist John Garner wasn't messing around; he sounds seriously damaged by affairs of the heart on this rip-roaring, guitar-freaking killer.

PARCHMAN FARM

CACTUS *(1970)*

The perfect example of how metal was born from the blues (but heading for the gutter), *Parchman Farm* is a song first recorded by Bukka White in 1940 and made famous by Mose Allison in 1957. Cactus drive it like they stole it –their version sounds like the soundtrack to a spectacularly violent heist movie.

RIDE THE SKY

LUCIFER'S FRIEND *(1970)*

Opening their self-titled debut, *Ride The Sky* charges out of the gate like the stampede of elephants you hear throughout the song courtesy of a well-placed French horn.

DEATH WALKS BEHIND YOU

ATOMIC ROOSTER *(1970)*

The title track from Rooster's second album opens with one of the doomiest, most terrifying intros ever. It's made scarier by knowing all three members are now dead, two by suicide. *'Lock the door, switch the light, you'll be so afraid tonight.'* Indeed.

FRUIT AND ICEBERGS

RANDY HOLDEN *(1970)*

Holden is probably best known as one of the guitarists on Blue Cheer's '69 album *New! Improved!* Soon after, he teamed up with drummer Chris Lockheed to create the long-lost *Population II* album, a festering, bruising, towering ode to the excess-is-best ethos. He went bankrupt making it and it never even got released at all until it showed up in bootleg form years later, but if things had gone Holden's way and if the album was released on schedule, it would have beaten Sab's first album by a few months. In essence, it really is the world's first metal record. And it's heavy as fuck.

DROWNED MY LIFE IN FEAR

LEAFHOUND *(1971)*

Formed from the ashes of British acid-blues band Black Cat Bones (the other half of BCB formed Free), Leafhound's tantalising cocktail of drugs and distortion was so ahead of it's time that their sole album (for 40 or so years), *Growers of Mushroom*, still sounds like it was released yesterday. It's also the blueprint for every stoner rock album of all time ever.

GUTS

BUDGIE *(1971)*

The bludgeoning low-end bass of Burke Shelley combined with the slow, Sabbathy groove of *Guts* makes this song a must-inclusion in the collection of any heavy hairy freak.

GETTY IMAGES X3

POWERS OF DARKNESS

RONNO *(1971)*

Obscure B-side from this short-lived band, which featured (no surprises for guessing) none other than Mick Ronson on guitar. Black magic and Satan feature pretty highly in the lyrical department and the main riff is seriously infectious.

WOMAN FOR SALE

TEAR GAS *(1971)*

Future Sensational Alex Harvey Band members riff hard on this track from their second and final full-length album.

SLEEPING SICKNESS

JPT SCARE BAND *(1971)*

They never really escaped their Kansas City basement in the early 70s and it wasn't until the 1990s until anybody even heard their alarming early recordings, but JPT Scare band was essentially the Cannibal Corpse of their day, the most extreme example of all-knobs-to-the-right heavy rock'n'roll that 1973 could muster. Blistering and sorta terrifying, even today. They were called the Scare Band for a reason, man.

QUESTIONS

BANG *(1972)*

One of the first American rock bands to openly worship and emulate Black Sabbath, Bang are, in fact, American doom pioneers, and their first album is a stone-cold classic of ugly distortion and steely-eyed downer rock. There have been many American Black Sabbath's since Bang, but they were the first. And still the best.

MESMERIZATION ECLIPSE

CAPTAIN BEYOND *(1972)*

There was heavyweight talent in this band including original Deep Purple singer Rod Evans and two ex-members of Iron Butterfly. A proto-metal must-hear, dealing power and finesse.

SUICIDE

DUST *(1972)*

Their drummer Marc Bell went on to fame as Marky Ramone. With lines like *'Electrocution, I thought would make me a star, I stood in the rain with my electric guitar,'* this gem from their second record details options on how one can go about buying the farm.

GO-GO GIRLS

HOT CHOCOLATE *(1972)*

Another surprise artist to be associated with the word 'heavy', but this 1972 B-side is exactly that. Maybe it was the success of Deep Purple that inspired a trend among more commercial pop bands to want to make heavier tracks. Maybe (as in the case of Sweet) it was really what they wanted to do but the record companies just didn't give them the freedom to express this side of themselves, thus merely 'allowing them' a few fewer commercial B-sides here and there?

Tony Iommi: the true master.

MAN FROM MECCA

SWEET *(1972)*

The B-side to *Little Willy* was just one of many lesser-known heavy Sweet tracks and couldn't have been moreof a contrast for it's flip.

FOREVER MY QUEEN

PENTAGRAM *(1973)*

One of the most underrated hard rock bands of all time have finally achieved a cult status and recognition around the world in more recent years. They should have been massive but were cursed from day one. Both Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley wanted to buy their songs during the peak of mid-70s Kiss success!

SHYLOCK

BUFFALO *(1973)*

Aussie heavies Buffalo go for the throat here. Lead by the gritty vocals of Dave Tice, they also featured future Rose Tattoo star Peter Wells.

SYMPTOM OF THE UNIVERSE

BLACK SABBATH *(1975)*

Perhaps the only true masters of early heavy metal. On this track from their sixth album, *Sabotage*, they sum it all up in one immense-sounding song.

THE RIPPER

JUDAS PRIEST *(1976)*

You're in for a shock. The future of metal was changing and this band were going to be at the forefront of it. Rob Halford's vocals would influence a future generation of screamers.

Their time is gonna come – soon: Led Zep sock it to New York on their fist visit to the US in May '69.

GETTY

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

Words: **Johnny Black**
Additional reporting: **Max Bell, Hugh Fielder, Dave Lewis, Dave Ling, Ian Ravendale, Mick Wall**

At the start of 1968, rock's original prime movers were flagging, and another generation of bands were ready to step into their shoes and crank their amps way up. When they'd finished, a whole new genre had been born.

The revolution began on January 12, 1969 when Led Zeppelin released their first album, and reached its crescendo on October 22 that year when they released the follow-up, *Led Zeppelin II*.

During those days and weeks in between, the foundations of hard rock and heavy metal were laid by such visionaries as Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Free, Humble Pie and more. It was a very British revolution, starting in pubs and clubs across the land before going on to conquer the stadiums of the world. By the time the dust had settled, nothing would be the same again.

This is the story of 300 days that changed the world.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main players in The Birth Of Heavy.

Al Atkins
Singer with Birmingham band The Bitta Suite and founder of Judas Priest.

Freddy Bannister
Heavyweight 60s promoter. The man behind the 1970 Bath Festival Of Blues And Progressive Music, which featured Led Zeppelin. Went on to promote mega-shows at Knebworth throughout the 1970s.

Dave Black
Guitarist with Newcastle band Kestrel. Later replaced Mick Ronson in the post-Bowie Spiders From Mars.

Ritchie Blackmore
Visionary guitarist and co-founder of Deep Purple. Largely responsible for beefing up their sound in 1969.

Mick Box
Founding guitarist with West London band Spice, who later renamed themselves Uriah Heep.

John Bonham
Late Led Zeppelin drummer, whose hard-hitting approach helped define a new, heavier sound.

Edgar Broughton
Founder and guitarist of the British psychedelic rock band named after him. Most famous for their cover of The Fugs' *Out, Demons, Out*.

Geezer Butler
Bassist with Birmingham blues rockers Earth, who later rechristened themselves Black Sabbath.

Geoff Docherty
Sunderland-based promoter and a key figure in the fledgling North East rock scene.

Tony Edwards
Late Deep Purple co-manager.

Peter Frampton
Former singer and guitarist with 60s pop outfit The Herd. Co-founded Humble Pie with Steve Marriott in early 1969.

Andy Fraser
Wunderkind 15-year-old bassist who co-founded Free in 1968.

Roger Glover
Bassist with London pop/rock band Episode Six. Joined Deep Purple along with singer Ian Gillan in 1969.

Ken Hensley
Keyboarist/guitarist with prog rock pioneers The Gods, before joining Spice/Uriah Heep.

Mick Box: Uriah Heap

Edgar Broughton

Neil Warnock

Tony Iommi
Guitarist with Earth/Black Sabbath and one of the founding fathers of the heavy metal sound.

John Paul Jones
In-demand session musician-turned Led Zeppelin bassist.

Deke Leonard
Guitarist with Welsh acid-rockers Man, leading lights of the Welsh rock scene.

Jon Lord
Late Deep Purple keyboard player and Hammond organ virtuoso. The driving force behind landmark symphonic rock album *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*.

Ken McKenzie
Owner of Multichord Studios in Sunderland, used by many local bands, including David Coverdale's early band Government.

Ozzy Osbourne
Former amateur burglar, and frontman with Earth/Black Sabbath.

Jimmy Page
Ex-Yardbirds guitarist. Founded the New Yardbirds (aka Led Zeppelin) in Autumn 1968.

Ian Paice
Linchpin Deep Purple drummer and the band's only constant member.

Andy Parker
Drummer with London space-rock outfit UFO, who would later reinvent themselves as hard rock/heavy metal figureheads.

Robert Plant
Led Zeppelin singer and former member of West Country bands the Crawling King Snakes and the Band Of Joy.

Terry Reid
Acclaimed 19-year-old blues-rock singer. Famously turned down a chance to join Led Zeppelin, recommending his friend Robert Plant instead.

Jerry Shirley
Drummer with Humble Pie. Joined the band in early 1969 when he was just 17.

Jim Simpson
Former jazz trumpeter-turned-impressario who ran Birmingham club Henry's Blueshouse. Managed Earth/Black Sabbath.

Neil Warnock
London-based booking agent who was partly responsible for the development of the capital's live circuit.

PART 1: SHAPES OF THINGS 1968

As far back as 1967, the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Cream and The Who had turned rock upside down, redrawing the boundaries of what could be done within music. But by 1968 all three found their creative juices becoming increasingly sapped by the demands of endless touring, especially in America.

Ian Paice (Deep Purple): It started in the mid-1960s with Cream, Hendrix and The Who. Those three switched all of us on. When The Who started making their presence felt, rock'n'roll went to a different level. The volume leapt up incredibly. Cream took the musicality of the thing and made that a speciality. And then Hendrix opened up a whole range of new possibilities.

Jack Bruce (Cream): That long US tour, February to June 1968, led to the demise of the band, simply because you can't lock up three guys in a car for that long, and because we never had time to write.

Eric Clapton (Cream): *Rolling Stone* ran an interview with us in which we were really praising ourselves, and it was followed by a review that said how boring our performance had been. The ring of truth had just knocked me backward; I was in a restaurant, and I fainted. And after I woke up I decided that that was the end of the band.

Jimi Hendrix (speaking in a radio interview): I can't play guitar any more the way I want to. I get very frustrated on stage when we play… Every time we come into town, everybody always looks towards us for some kind of answer, for what's happening to them and… which is a good feeling… but it's very hard.

Noel Redding (Jimi Hendrix Experience): We got through the last tour by constantly telling ourselves: "This is our last American tour. We can do it…", when we felt like death warmed up.

Terry Reid: Every band was breaking up or forming, or breaking up and re-forming. It was like Scrabble, everything flying in all directions. Music was changing. Not the industry, but the groups, and the singles market had become the albums market.

* * *

Waiting in the wings were two former Yardbirds guitarists with big plans. One was Jeff Beck, whose eponymous Group released their debut album, *Truth*, in August 1968, laying down the template for what was to come. The other was Beck's old oppo, Jimmy Page, who was putting together his new band, initially dubbed The New Yardbirds.

Mick Box (Spice/Uriah Heep): When Jeff Beck's *Truth* came out, that's when everything started to change. Them and Led Zeppelin. I saw Zeppelin at the Cooksferry Inn in Edmonton. I sat in front of John Bonham's huge drum kit, which was so massive they could barely get it on to the stage. Plant wasn't in front of it, he was by the side. They were very, very exciting.

GETTY X3

Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin): I wanted the group to be a marriage of blues, hard rock and acoustic music with heavy choruses – a combination that hadn't been explored before. I'd originally thought of getting Terry Reid in as lead singer and second guitarist, but he had just signed with Mickie Most as a solo artist in a quirk of fate. He suggested I get in touch with Robert Plant, who was then in a band called Obbs-Tweedle.

Terry Reid: Everyone knew everybody. I became part of the pool. I was asked to join what became Led Zeppelin. Jimmy Page also asked Steve Marriott and Stevie Winwood cos he wanted a singer and guitarist.

John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin): As soon as I heard John Bonham play, I knew this was going to be great. We locked together as a team immediately.

Neil Warnock (booking agent): I controlled the talent bookings into a lot of the Central London colleges, and I was seeing the progression of, for example, The Yardbirds becoming Led Zeppelin. We had to bill them as 'Led Zeppelin – formerly The Yardbirds'. They didn't want that, but I had to give it some recognition factor with the kids to help sell tickets.

* * *

Page and Beck weren't the only ones standing on the edge of a revolution. As 1968 progressed, a groundswell of bands at the lower end of rock's food chain began to turn up their amps. In London, members of Black Cat Bones and Wilde Flowers joined forces as Free, while in Birmingham a little-known blues band called Earth started to toughen up their sound.

Andy Fraser (Free): The first night we got together to audition each other, we knew we had it. There was just no doubt. So we weren't afraid to go up against anyone. We would tour with The Who, Small Faces, Family, anybody, and we were still confident in each other.

Mick Box: I saw Free in their very early days, at a pub in Wood Green. Their simplicity and energy blew me away.

GETTY X2

Andy Fraser: Robert Plant came to see us play in Birmingham. He came back to the hotel afterwards for a jam, which people did a lot in those days, and told us he'd just been offered a gig with the New Yardbirds, on a good wage.

Jim Simpson (Earth/Black Sabbath manager): I had started a blues night, Henry's Blues House, in Birmingham in September 1968, which Tony Iommi and Ozzy Osbourne joined as members. They came along most weeks and we chatted about their band, which was called Earth, and I ended up managing them. They were a blues band, but they were looking for a new direction and, even then, Ozzy was absolutely mesmerising on stage.

Ozzy Osbourne (Earth/Black Sabbath): I went to the same school as the guitarist, Tony Iommi. He was in a band called Mythology with Bill Ward, the drummer. I was in a group called the Rare Breed with Geezer Butler. I didn't like the band. The fucking guitar player was a bully. Geezer agreed and we decided to leave. I put an ad in a music shop in Birmingham and Tony and Bill turned up. We called ourselves Earth.

Humble Pie: one of the bands key to the development of the new, heavier sound.

Led Zeppelin: ahead of the curve at the beginning of 1969.

Tony Iommi (Earth/Black Sabbath): It was very difficult doing what we did, because it was all soul clubs and blues clubs.

Keith Law (Velvet Fogg): Lots of musos would meet after gigs in Birmingham, at such places as The Cedar, Rum Runner, Opposite Lock, Rebecca's, and after at Alex's Pie Stand, there was a great camaraderie.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

> "OUR PRODUCER, GLYN JOHNS, SAID: 'LET ME PLAY YOU THIS ALBUM. IT'S A NEW BAND, LED ZEPPELIN.' I HEARD IT AND MY JAW JUST HIT THE FLOOR."
>
> PETER FRAMPTON

PART 2: YOUR TIME IS GONNA COME
JANUARY – MARCH 1969

Led Zeppelin were already way ahead of the curve compared to other bands. They had recorded their debut album the previous September, and the buzz around them was growing in Britain and America thanks to some sledgehammer live shows. *Led Zeppelin I* was released on January 12, 1969. It peaked at No.6 in the UK and No.10 in the US . The balloon had gone up.

Jimmy Page: The first album came together really quick. It was cut very shortly after the band was formed. For material, we obviously went right down to our blues roots. I still had plenty of Yardbirds riffs left over.

John Paul Jones: We never listened to the same music. I've always maintained that Zeppelin was the space between us. Bonzo was into soul and Motown, I was into jazz and classical, Jimmy was into rockabilly, blues and folk, and Robert was into blues and Elvis. Nobody on the outside of the band could believe this, but we considered it valuable.

Edgar Broughton: I remember the uniqueness of the music, and having to accept that I'd never heard anything like that before. It was the incredible guitar playing and the violence of the drums that did it for me. And they'd managed to capture this huge heavy rock sound in the studio, which was quite a rare thing in those days.

MOTHERS' PRIDE

How a former ballroom in Birmingham helped shape British rock.

London's Marquee might be more famous today, but Birmingham's Mothers was no less important in the development of British rock in the late 60s. The late John Peel called it "the best club in Britain".

A former ballroom above a furniture shop in the suburb of Erdington, Mothers was opened in 1968 by local manager John 'Spud' Taylor and promoter Phil Myatt. Boasting the slogan 'The Home Of Good Sounds', it swiftly became a stop-off for virtually every band who hit the touring circuit in 1969: Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple all played there, as did Free, Terry Reid, Fleetwood Mac, Yes and the Edgar Broughton Band. Traffic made their live debut at Mothers, while Pink Floyd recorded parts of *Ummagumma* on its hallowed stage.

"I can remember Deep Purple coming back from America and me booking them into Mothers," says agent Neil Warnock. "They'd had a big pop single in America which had flopped in England, so they meant very little here. People thought even the name was a bit naff. But when they played at Mothers, everybody went: 'Fuck me, this is great.'"

Like many venues of the era, it was less than glamorous, which only added to its charm. "After you had queued for ages you entered a dark place, passing first through the bar area and then into the Big Room which, by today's gig standards, was tiny," recalls local Mothers regular Andy Goff. "A few tables and chairs at the front and sides, and then a theoretical dance floor in the middle. But who was dancing? We were there for the music."

Sadly this landmark club closed on January 3, 1971 after Taylor and Myatt were unable to work out a leasing arrangement with the landlords. The last artist to play there was a rising pianist from Pinner named Elton John. Happily its significance in rock's development was finally recognised in 2013, when an English Heritage Blue Plaque was unveiled on the site where it used to stand.

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The site of what John Peel said at the time was "the best club in Britain".

Andy Parker (Hocus Pocus/UFO): I was a huge fan of The Who, Cream and Hendrix, but Zeppelin's first album made me go: "Jesus!" All of a sudden the music took on this new heaviness.

Andy Fraser (Free): We'd listen to Zeppelin, who were somewhat like us, coming from the blues into rock but with lots of other influences. We'd go: "Yeah, really, really good musicians", but some of their songs weren't as good as their musicianship. Robert Plant would be screaming away and we'd be like: "Couldn't he think of some lyrics?"

* * *

Zeppelin's first album proved to be a catalyst for another band who were key to the development of the new, heavier sound. Humble Pie were formed at the beginning of 1969 by Small Faces frontman Steve Marriott and ex-The Herd guitarist Peter Frampton.

Peter Frampton (The Herd/Humble Pie): At the end of 1968 I was in Paris, working on a Johnny Hallyday album with the Small Faces. They went back to do a New Year's Eve date at Alexandra Palace, and I stayed on in Paris with our producer, Glyn Johns. Late on New Year's Eve, Glyn says: "Let me play you this album. We recorded it in ten days. It's this new band, Led Zeppelin." I heard it and my jaw just hit the floor. I just loved Jimmy's playing and the singing, but the thing that really floored me was John Bonham's incredible bass drum sound and feel. Then Steve Marriott actually rang me in between side one and side two of the Zeppelin album. He had walked off stage at Ally Pally, and he says: "I've had it. I'm finished with this band."

Jerry Shirley (drummer, Humble Pie): Meanwhile, I'd been playing a New Year's gig with my then-band, Little Women, and got back to my parents' house sometime after midnight. The phone rang and it's Steve, asking if he can join the band that Peter and I were forming.

Peter Frampton: Basically, Steve had wanted me to join the Small Faces and the others weren't having it. So he told them: "If you won't let Pete join, I'm gonna join Pete's band."

Jerry Shirley: We never saw ourselves as a heavy metal band. We were a really powerful hard-rockin' blues band. We were trying to be Dylan's backing group, The Band, but Mk II. There's one track on their first album called *Chest Fever* which is pretty heavy stuff, not metal, but heavyweight.

* * *

Around the same time, Earth travelled south from Birmingham to play their first London gig, supporting jazz-rockers Colosseum at the Marquee club. But this wasn't just a London phenomenon. Elsewhere across the country, similar venues were becoming a breeding ground for a new wave of bands.

Freddy Bannister (concert promoter): Basically, the scene had changed at the end of the 60s from pop groups to more progressive bands. In early January 1969 I put on a show at Bath Pavilion with Jethro Tull, Aynsley Dunbar's Retaliation, Love Sculpture, Jeff Beck, Moby Grape, Amen Corner and John Lee Hooker. That gives you some idea of what was going on.

Ken McKenzie (owner of Sunderland's Multichord Studios): Things changed in Sunderland thanks mainly to a promoter named Geoff Docherty who brought amazing bands to the area. Because of his contacts in London, he could get bands like Pink Floyd and Deep Purple.

Geoff Docherty (North East promoter): I had a six-week gap between gigs by Family and Pink Floyd. I booked Free to do January 13, 1969 for £35. Nobody had heard of them so there weren't many people there. That first time, the people that did come thought it was free to get in, because of the name. I thought it was a stupid name. But the band were young and energetic and fitted together very well. I had faith in them.

Simon Kirke: Free and the North East had a wonderful relationship. Our music was stripped-down, passionate blues that appealed to the very down-home people of the North East.

Geoff Docherty: Whenever I had Free on, the gigs were jam-packed. Everyone went wild. Girls would faint, and I'd lift them up and carry them backstage. I had my suspicions they were doing it on purpose so they could get to meet the group.

Dave Black (Kestrel): North East soul bands changed into rock bands in 1969. They still had brass sections, but started rocking it up and doing songs like *Sunshine Of Your Love*. It was the first time bands started writing songs based on riffs.

Edgar Broughton (Edgar Broughton Band): It wasn't like prog was coming up over there and metal was over here. It was more like this big musical stew, and you'd just stick in a spoon and have a taste. I don't think any of us really knew what we were doing. There was a sense that if you had an idea and reckoned you could see it through, then just do it. Also, amps and speakers were getting more powerful. Suddenly you had that big bass speaker flapping away. It was almost physical, it made your shirt flap. People were starting to make that heavier sound, because they could.

* * *

There were still pockets of the country where the wind of change wasn't penetrating. Welsh acid rockers Man, for one, had no truck with many of their British contemporaries.

Deke Leonard (Man): As far as bands like Free, Black Sabbath, Hawkwind and that sort of thing went, we ignored it all. We considered ourselves part of the alternative culture. Our influences were American rock groups, so we listened to their records all day and then made our music in the evening – Zappa, Beefheart, Quicksilver. I liked Terry Reid. He was 24-carat fucking genuine.

Terry Reid: I made good money that year. I was never without a gig, even on what we called the bread-and-butter circuit. There was plenty of butter. Work was plentiful. I think the music I made then stands the test of time.

Black Sabbath during their exhausting run of shows at Hamburg's Star Club in 1969.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"SABBATH USED TO HATE THE ART SCHOOL BANDS. IT WAS OUT AND OUT CLASS WAR AGAINST WEAK-KNEED POP, AND THAT INCLUDED LED ZEPPELIN."

JIM SIMPSON, SABBATH MANAGER

* * *

In the final week of January, Cream released their farewell album, *Goodbye*. Peaking at No.1 in the UK and No.2 in the USA, it represented a changing of the guard.

Eric Clapton: We started a ball rolling which I don't like being responsible for. People say we started the heavy metal thing. Which is quite an indictment.

John Bonham (Led Zeppelin): I was influenced by Ginger Baker. He was the first to show that a drummer could be a forward thing in a rock band, not just stuck at the back and forgotten about.

Ginger Baker (drummer, Cream): People say Cream gave birth to heavy metal. If that's so, we should have had an abortion.

Jack Bruce (bassist, Cream): I still don't take the blame for inventing heavy metal. Hang that one on Led Zeppelin.

Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin): There was such a difference, even on first hearing, between us and Cream. There was an intense difference. There were groups in the country other than us who could have filled Cream's place more specifically.

Geezer Butler: Zeppelin paved the way for us. Obviously, we used to get compared to them – they were the heaviest thing, up until we came along. They very much started the genre, and we cashed in on it.

Deke Leonard: I liked Led Zeppelin. Especially when they were proto-heavy metal. We liked hard driving music, something with fire in its belly, not wishy-washy Moody Blues crap. Jethro Tull and Deep Purple, I thought they were tripe.

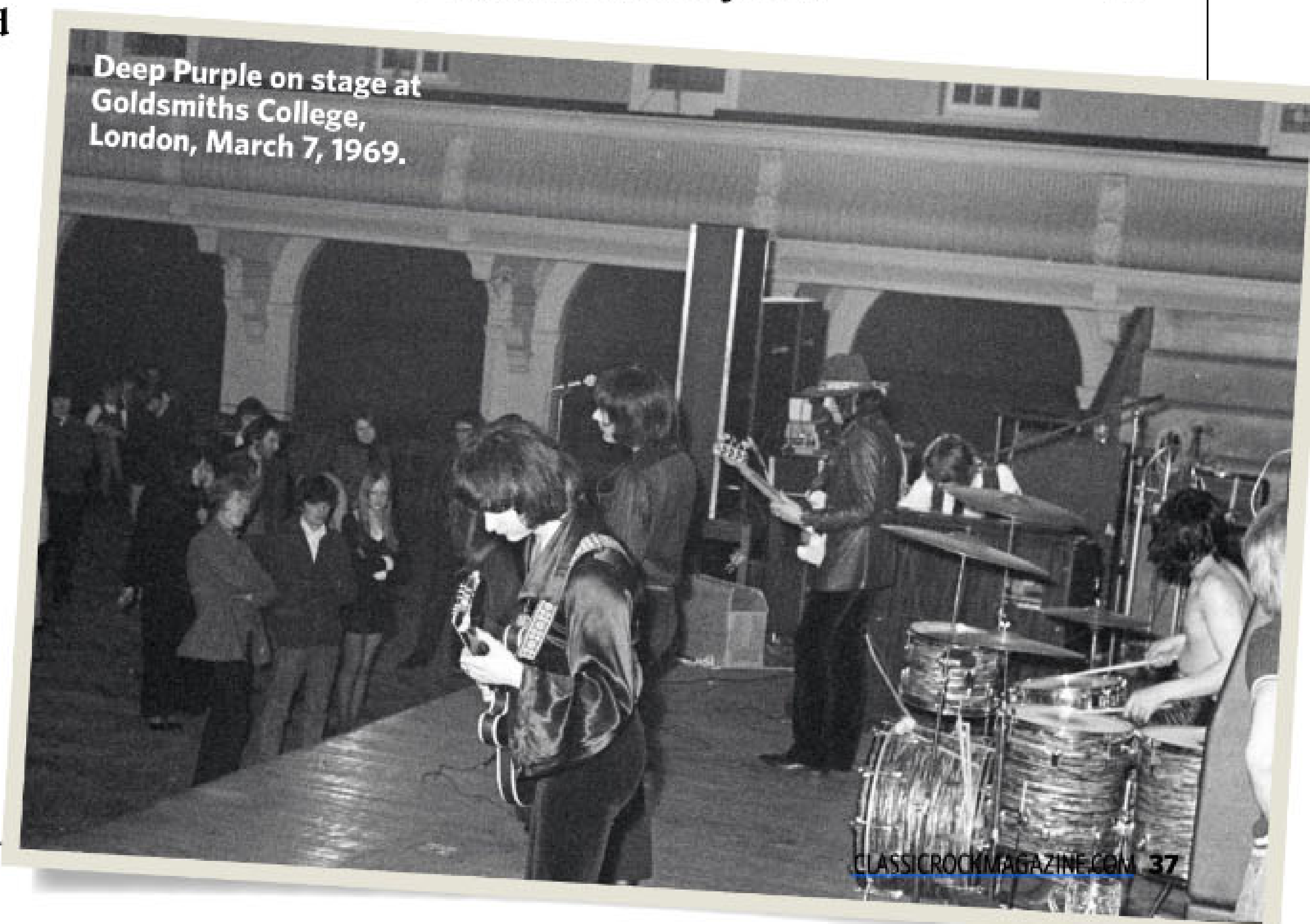
* * *

Deep Purple had already released two patchy albums of proto-prog rock with original singer Rod Evans in 1968, though they had notched up a fluke US hit with their cover of Joe South's *Hush*. In February they kicked off a two-week tour of England at Birmingham's Top Rank club.

Jon Lord (Deep Purple, speaking in 1969): I suppose you could say we are playing symphonic rock. We're classed as an underground group in the States especially, but we were a Top 40 group first, then went underground. There's a possibility that recognition is slow coming here because of that chart success. There is a snobbery, whatever people may say; blues groups who don't like to admit that they'd like the success that comes from hit records. So they go on earning £100 a night, and we're doing twenty times as much.

* * *

March 1969 would be a key staging post in the rise of this new music. Early in the month, Led Zeppelin recorded a live session for BBC DJ John Peel's *Top Gear* show, the bastion of underground music. The same month, Peel got his first taste of Earth, at Sunderland's Bay Hotel. And on March 14 Free released their first album, *Tons Of Sobs*.



Deep Purple on stage at Goldsmiths College, London, March 7, 1969.

GETTY X2

Geoff Docherty (promoter): I got Peel to come up. I was so excited. It was like meeting Elvis. Peel was the one who had started the musical revolution. And kept it going. It was Peely that was the draw, not Earth or the headliners, Van Der Graaf. He played some records for the crowd and introduced the bands. Earth didn't really get much of a reaction. They weren't loud. The PA wasn't big enough for that.

Andy Fraser: When we went into the studio to make our first album we were starting from the beginning. We didn't know what it was like to try and create that good feeling of a gig in this total silence. But we learned fast. And it was always about making albums. We didn't even think about what might make a good single. Consequently we didn't even release a single from that first album.

PART 3 : DAZED AND CONFUSED
APRIL – JULY 1969

As the summer approached, it was hard not to sense a change in the air. For Deep Purple, this meant restructuring themselves to adapt to the new scene. In June, as the band released their third album, singer Rod Evans and bassist Nick Simper were replaced by Ian Gillan and Roger Glover of North London outfit Episode Six. Guitarist Ritchie Blackmore had initially approached Terry Reid for the frontman's job, only for Reid to politely decline.

Roger Glover (Episode Six/Deep Purple): I think Episode Six had 13 or 14 singles out, none of which made it. I had visions of my doing a one man, one guitar thing. Then I heard *Led Zeppelin* and that changed all my ideas musically. I suddenly realised that I wanted to be in a heavy band.

Ritchie Blackmore: I could tell the fashion was going to be for screamers with depth and an overall blues feel, which is why we got Ian. He had a scream, but also had a way of singing which was very different. He's got a lot of identity there, and you always know when it's Ian singing.

Roger Glover: Ian called me and suggested I help him write some songs for Purple. So I said yes. I went to Jon Lord's flat and we played him our songs. He didn't like them, but asked if I wanted to do a session that evening. Of course I said yes, because I knew it meant money. I did the session [June 7, recording the single *Hallelujah* at De Lane Lea studios, London], and made a few constructive suggestions. Then, to my astonishment, they offered me the gig as a bass player.

Ritchie Blackmore: There was a chemistry and, basically, we were all very enthusiastic. Plus the band was very musically inclined. Roger is an excellent catalyst who is very good at putting things together. Ian was a very good showman and a good-looking guy who had an incredible voice. Jon was a very good arranger and musician in the old-school form, who could put it down on paper. I was the mad, irritable guitarist, I suppose, who certain people could relate to, and I thought I also played quite well.

Deep Purple with Malcolm Arnold, who conducted the orchestra for *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*.

Above: Judas Priest by Michael Ochs circa 1970
Right: Welsh rock scene flag carriers Man.

By the middle of the month the new-look Purple were rehearsing in West London's Hanwell Community Centre, where they found themselves sharing the facilities with local outfit Spice.

Ken Hensley (Spice/Uriah Heep): When I joined Spice they were already in the studio recording the first album and two or three songs were finished, including *Come Away Melinda* and *Wake Up (Set Your Sights)*. What I brought to the band was different songs, obviously, and the Hammond which helped them to evolve.

Mick Box: We wrote *Gypsy* at Hanwell, with Deep Purple rehearsing in the next room. You can imagine the racket we were making between us.

Roger Glover: Ritchie had mentioned that he liked Hendrix's *Fire*. I stood there in the huge, echoey gym and started playing the first thing that came into my head that would convey a similar feeling. They all joined in, making it sound great, and a jam ensued which would set the course of the song *Speed King*. It was exhilarating.

Ken Hensley: It was also at Hanwell that Gerry [Bron, Spice's manager and owner of Bronze Records] walked in and said he was going to change the name from Spice to Uriah Heep. We just said: "Yeah, fine, whatever you want to call it…" and carried on playing, because we were having way too much fun.

On July 5, Led Zeppelin kicked off their third North American tour – a gruelling, 36-date coast-to-coast slog which had them playing arenas and stadiums for the first time. Not only did it consolidate the band's success, it also put this very British movement on the international stage. Other bands benefited from their success, not least Ten Years After and Humble Pie, both of whom were making waves in the US.

Jimmy Page: It was like a tornado, and it went rolling across the country.

DEEP PURPLE, LENNON-GETTY

Free kick out the jams at the Isle of Wight Festival in August '69.

REX FEATURES

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

> **"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO TRY AND CREATE THAT GOOD FEELING OF A GIG IN TOTAL SILENCE IN THE STUDIO. BUT WE LEARNED FAST."**
>
> **ANDY FRASER, FREE**

Pete Townshend (The Who): People used to come and see us, and in Britain it was: "You are our favourite group with Deep Purple." And I'd go: "Huh?" And in America it used to be: "You are our favourite group with Ten Years After." And it was very hard to live with, in a way, that we were being lumped in with these very heavy metal bands.

Peter Frampton: Although we had heavy riffs, we also had Steve singing over the top with his very soulful, R&B, blues voice, which wasn't at all how metal vocalists would sing.

PART 4: NATIVITY IN BLACK
July – August 1969

In July 1969, Birmingham's Earth learned that at least one other band had the same name.

Jim Simpson: We were all making suggestions for the new name, but none of them seemed right until Geezer said Black Sabbath, which he'd got from the title of an old Boris Karloff horror movie.

Ozzy Osbourne: It was a different angle. At the time, it was all bells and flowers and hippies.

Tony Iommi: That's when it all started to happen. The name sounded mysterious, it gave people something to think about, and it gave us a direction to follow.

Jim Simpson: The Sabs were always captivating, very in-your-face live, but the thing that really made them tight was a stint at the Star Club in Hamburg, where The Beatles had played, in August.

Ozzy Osbourne: We used to play really loud. As loud as we could get it, trying to drown out all the conversation in the club.

Jim Simpson: When they came back, Tony's fingers were bleeding and Ozzy couldn't speak. They'd been playing every day from eight at night till four in the morning, 45 minutes on, 15 off.

* * *

The day before the newly christened Black Sabbath played their last gig at the Star Club, a landmark event was taking place on a farm in upstate New York. Beginning on August 15 and billed as 'Three Days Of Peace And Love', the Woodstock Festival was the biggest music happening to that point. For many British musicians at the time, Woodstock in particular and American culture in general were a world away from what they were doing.

Pete Townshend: All these hippies wandering about, thinking the world was going to be different from that day on. As a cynical English arsehole, I wandered through it all and felt like spitting on the lot of them and shaking them, trying to make them realise that nothing had changed and nothing was going to change. Not only that, what they thought was an alternative society was basically a field full of six-foot-deep mud laced with LSD. If that was the world they wanted to live in, then fuck the lot of them.

Terry Reid: All the Vietnam stuff washed over me, but I was aware of Woodstock.

Ian Paice: That whole flower-power thing was very much a US-based thing. A few bands jumped on to the bandwagon and that was alright, they made some nice pop records, but that's all they were.

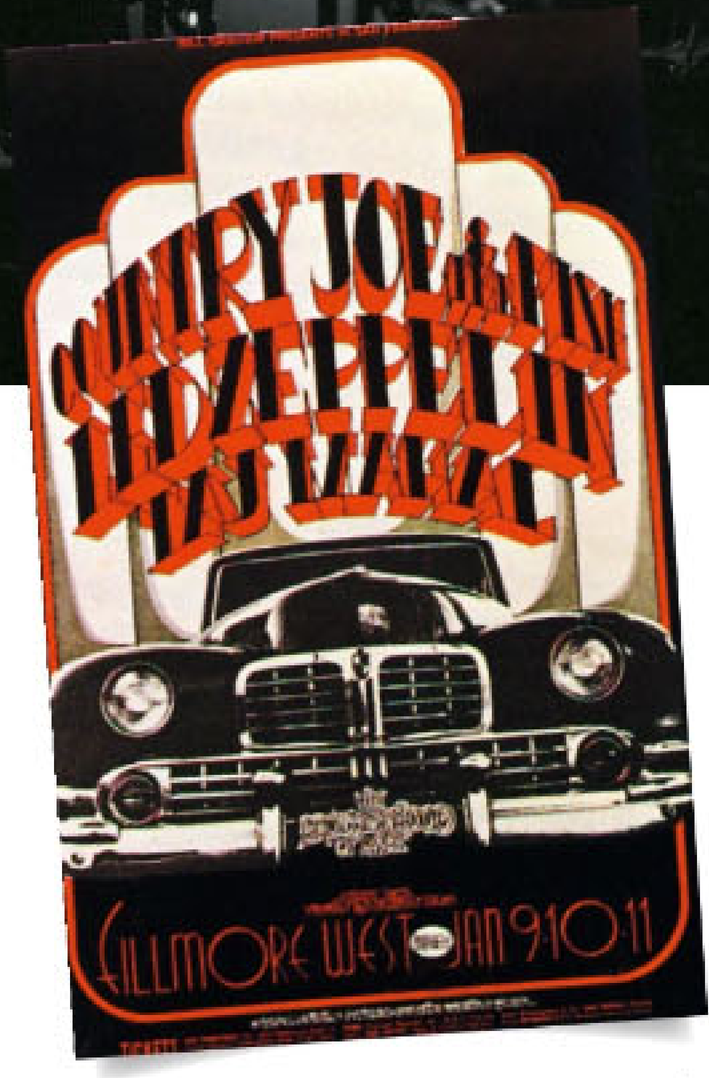
Al Atkins (The Bitta Suite/Judas Priest): Birmingham was such a rough- and-ready, heavily industrialised area. When you left school you had two choices: you could work in a factory, or you could work in a foundry. In West Bromwich you didn't see people sitting under palm trees wearing Bermuda shorts, strumming acoustic guitars. Where I come from even the sparrows cough.

Mick Box: The nine-to-five lifestyle wasn't an option, and sport or music were the only realistic escape routes.

Jim Simpson: Sabbath used to hate all of the art school bands. It was an out and out class war against weak-kneed pop, and that included Zeppelin.

Ken Hensley: We weren't overly concerned with class distinctions. The music was aimed at the audience, whoever they were. Most of the bands knew that we have to give them something they didn't have to work to hard to understand. ●▸

"I think we've got something going here…" New York goes Zep crazy.



The Zeppelin has landed: Plant and Jones arrive in the US.

On August 30, as legions of flower-painted camper vans parked in serried ranks for the second Isle of Wight Festival, the rechristened Black Sabbath played their very first gig under their new name, at the Malvern Winter Gardens.

Jim Simpson: There was no band as heavy as the Sabs. We had a strap-line on our adverts, which was: 'Makes Led Zeppelin sound like a kindergarden house band'. That's the flag we sailed under.

Tony Iommi: A couple of years before, in the factory where I worked, I did sheet metal work, and the cutter came down on my fingers, took the ends of my middle and ring finger off.

Geezer Butler: Tony tuned down to make it easier to grip the strings. He made himself plastic fingertips.

Tony Iommi: Before the accident, I could play in the normal way, using full chords and everything. But after the accident, I had to think and play differently. I came up with these fatter chords that I could play with less fingers.

* * *

The equipment the bands used was key to this new sound. Amps were getting bigger and more powerful. Bass strings were becoming fatter and more resonant. Conversely, drugs played a minimal part in the development of many bands' sound.

Jim Simpson: The relationship between Sabbath's equipment and their music was much more important than it was for a ska band or a pop band. If Tony saw someone with a stack of speakers taller than his he would spit blood.

Edgar Broughton: We had so many speakers at one time. If four or five went off we'd just shrug and carry on. We landed up with these great big 300-watt Marshall cabinets. I mean, you could almost lie on the sound.

Peter Frampton: We were playing Gretschs, then Steve and I switched over to a Gibson Les Paul. The Les Paul offered a heavier sound. If you looked at metal bands, well Ritchie Blackmore always played a Strat, Jimmy Page played a Les Paul.

Ken Hensley: One competitive area was who had the most Marshall stacks on stage. When you consider we were coming out of an age of The Beatles and Cliff Richard, suddenly everyone wanted to turn everything up to eleven.

Al Atkins: Me and [future Judas Priest bassist] Bruno Stapenhill were invited to a Marshall exhibition in Birmingham. Deep Purple played there, and they were so loud they just blew us away. Right away I knew I had to have a band like that – to do something really, really loud.

Edgar Broughton: When we first started recording at Abbey Road all the technicians in their lab coats would start looking concerned whenever the needles went into the red. Just a year later needles were constantly going into the red and everybody had got used to it.

Jim Simpson: In my time with Sabbath I had no indication whatsoever of any drugs usage in the band. They drank beer. It's a working-class thing. They worked hard and they drank hard. Drugs didn't come in with Sabbath until much later.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

> **"I CALL OUR '69 TOUR 'THE LED ZEPPELIN TOUR'. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE HAD TO PLAY FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF. I BLAME JIMMY PAGE."**
>
> **CHARLIE WATTS, THE ROLLING STONES**

GETTY X3

Edgar Broughton: Drugs did have an influence, both good and bad. We just smoked hashish and occasionally did some mescaline or some mushrooms. I suppose you could describe us as intelligently cautious. And most of us are still around.

Ken Hensley: Drugs were never constructive. Maybe we'd try a little bit here and there but we knew in our hearts of hearts that we didn't need it. It was only later that drugs became such a destructive force.

* * *

While there was camaraderie between some of the bands, many others operated in a vacuum. There may have been a revolution going on, but in part it was an accidental one.

Andy Fraser: We weren't really aware of bands like Black Sabbath. I was more likely to be playing the new Gladys Knight single to the other guys in the band, or Paul would rush in and play something by Otis Redding.

Geezer Butler: Zeppelin were our favourite band by that time. It was all we listened to. And I used to know Planty and Bonham from Birmingham, so we were glad that they'd finally done something. That's who we used to get stoned to together – lying down on the floor, smoking our dope and listening to Zeppelin.

* * *

Black Sabbath begun their recording career on August 22, when they recorded two tracks, *The Rebel* and *A Song For Jim*, at Trident Studios in London. Shortly after, they recorded an entire album of demos at Birmingham's Zella Studios.

Jim Simpson: Once Sabbath started writing and recording it was impossible to figure out what their influences were. There was a huge chasm between what came before and them. It was not step by step, it was a leap, and it came from them.

Tony Iommi: We started off playing blues, but the first time we threw in a couple of our own songs, *Black Sabbath* and *Wicked World*, people came up and said: "We really loved those two songs." We were well pleased.

Jim Simpson: They were so well-rehearsed that the recordings in Birmingham were a cinch. It was just a case of getting the levels and pressing play. But I took the demos to fourteen record companies and got fourteen straight nos. They could not understand it. If they had sounded like Simon And Garfunkel there would have been something the A&R guys could compare it to, but they'd just never heard anything like Sabbath.

PART 5: BRING IT ON HOME
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 1969

By the autumn, the new scene's momentum was gathering pace exponentially. Perversely, the Deep Purple Mk 2 decided it was time to make a fully fledged symphonic rock album, *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, recorded at the Royal Albert Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Preposterous? Yes. But also proof of their ambition.

Tony Edwards (Deep Purple manager): Jon Lord said to me that he dreamed of writing a work that could be performed by a rock group and a symphony orchestra. I came home, booked the Albert Hall [for Sep 24], and he was appalled.

Jon Lord: I'd come back from a gig at three in the morning and have to sit up the rest of the night scoring for a 100-piece orchestra. It drove a wedge between me and the rest of the band. But it did make us famous.

Ritchie Blackmore: I thought it was a total gimmick. I told Jon I'd be prepared to try it, but that I had a lot of heavy rock numbers I wanted to put on an LP, and we'd see which one took off. I didn't want to be involved with the concerto because of the novelty effect, and the press we were getting out of playing it at the Royal Albert Hall, but I said that if the next LP didn't take off I was prepared to play with orchestras for the rest of my life.

* * *

On October 16, Black Sabbath entered Regent Sound Studios in London to record their debut album. It took them eight hours and cost a grand total of £600.

Geezer Butler: We went into the studio, set up our equipment and recorded it as a live gig. Tony did a couple of overdubs, solos and things, and that was it.

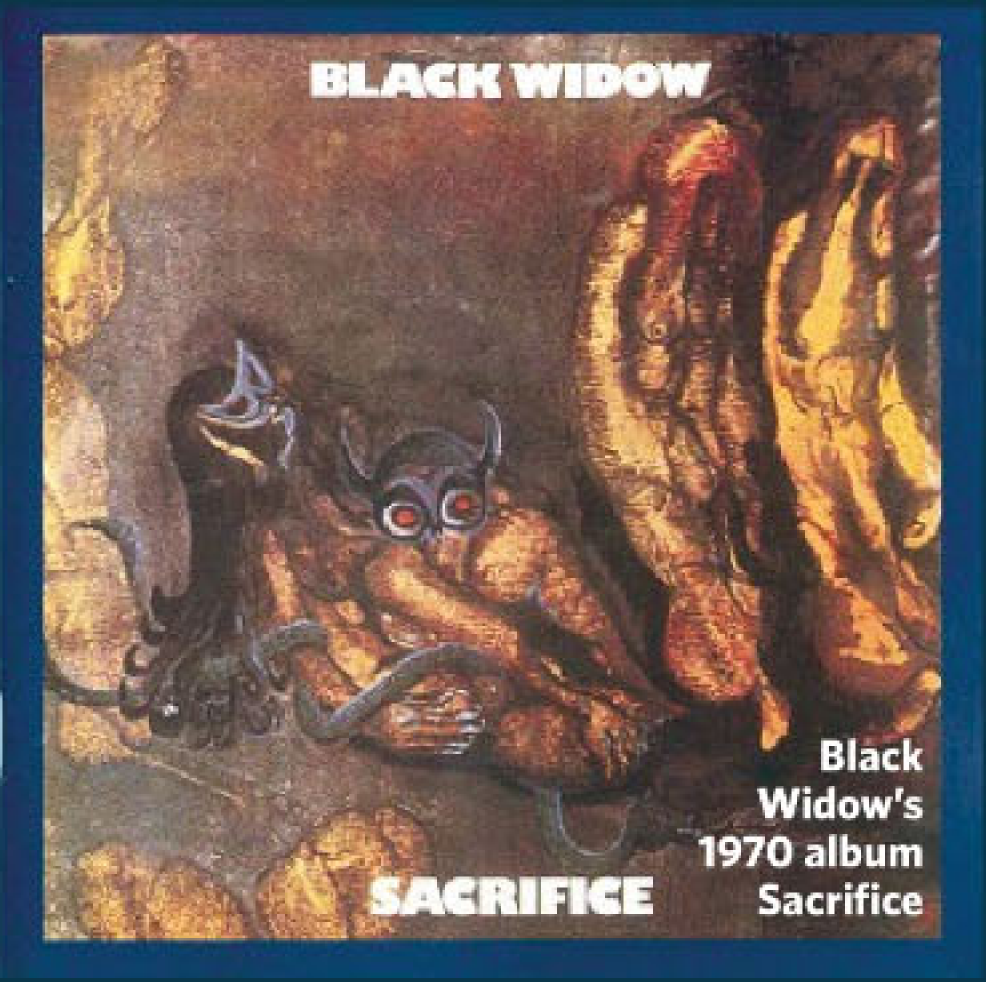
Jim Simpson: By letting them just be Sabbath, producer Roger Bain got the best out of them. All he did was record it faithfully. Roger's only real masterstroke was adding thunder and lightning to the start of the album, which gave it a great atmospheric opening. When I took the finished album back round all those record companies again, it got rejected. At the last minute, I got a call from a guy, Olav Wyper, at a newly set up label, Vertigo. Olav had been at CBS when I took the album there, and said he'd now like to ➧

OUT, DEMONS, OUT!

Need a bit of controversy? Try black magic and on-stage naked sacrifices .

Black Sabbath may have found themselves pegged as a 'satanic' band in their early days, but they had nothing on another band with a similar name who also emerged in 1969: Black Widow.

Formed in Leicester, they became notorious for their stage show, in which they 'sacrificed' a naked girl, and also for their association with Alex and Maxine Sanders – the so-called 'King And Queen Of The Witches'. Their debut LP *Sacrifice*, which included the spooky *Come To The Sabbat*, remains a landmark meeting of black magic and heavy rock. "We were the first band to get into black magic and base a show on it," says Clive Beer-Jones, the group's flute and saxophone player.



Black Widow's 1970 album Sacrifice

It started innocuously enough. The band began life as Pesky Gee!, in 1966, covering soul hits in pubs and clubs. By the time they released their sole album as Pesky Gee!, *Exclamation Mark*, in '69, they'd moved away from soul covers to psychedelic rock. But when that record sank without traced they realised that an even more drastic rethink was in order to stand out from the other heavy rock bands who'd begun to dominate the music scene.

"We found we were trapped with all the other bands who were also going a bit heavy," says Beer-Jones. "So our drummer, Clive Box, came up with the idea that we should go down the black magic route. And we all had an interest in it."

By September 1969 they'd changed their name to Black Widow, and soon after met Alex and Maxine Sanders, who would help steer the band's philosophical direction on stage and off.

"Alex made sure we used the right words and demon names, and directed us on stage with the magic circle," says Beer-Jones. "He always used to reckon we could conjure a demon. We tried it every night on stage, but it never worked."

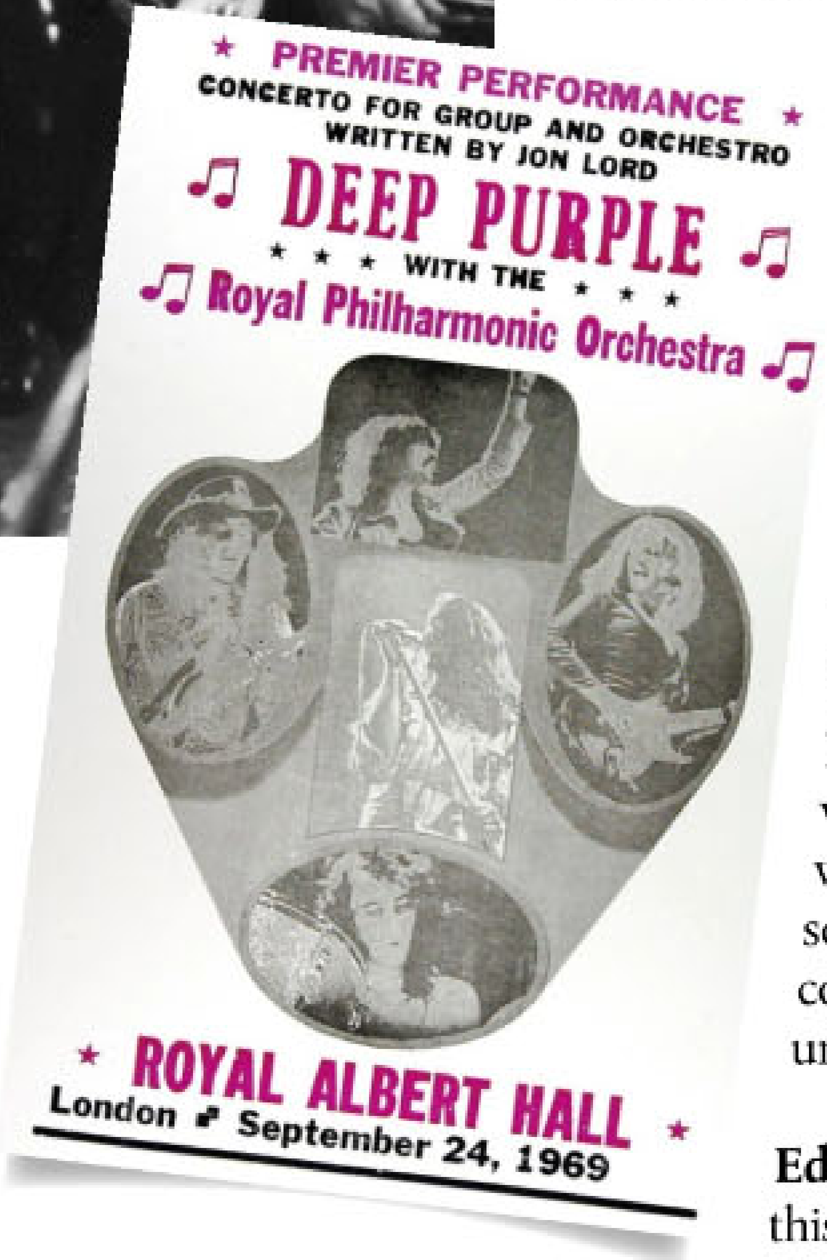
With vocalist Kip Trevor pretending to ritually sacrifice a naked girl with a knife during live shows, the band's notoriety grew. It reached a peak when they played London's Lyceum Ballroom, which also hosted the Miss World contest. On hearing about Black Widow's antics, furious Miss World organiser Eric Morley told the band that the sacrificed girl had to be fully clothed.

"Strangely enough, she ended up naked," says Beer-Jones. "There were reporters and photographers there, and we ended up in the *News Of The World*. That was the start of the 'Don't let your kids see this band!' thing."

The band's debut album, the prog-influenced *Sacrifice*, was released in March 1970, a month after Black Sabbath's own debut, and caused a minor stir – not least among confused record buyers. "A lot of people asked for the album by 'the black magic band' and were sold the Sabbath album."

The appeal of the occult soon wore off for some members, and they ditched the black magic trappings for their next two albums. The band split in 1973. Today, Beer-Jones continues to fly the Black Widow flag. Their first three albums are due to be released in 2014, including a deluxe, three-disc version of *Sacrifice*. **IR**

Deep Purple rehearse with the Royal Philharmonic at the Albert Hall in September '69



★ PREMIER PERFORMANCE ★
CONCERTO FOR GROUP AND ORCHESTRO
WRITTEN BY JON LORD
♫ DEEP PURPLE ♫
★ ★ ★ WITH THE ★ ★ ★
♫ Royal Philharmonic Orchestra ♫
★ ROYAL ALBERT HALL ★
London • September 24, 1969

do a deal. This was only because, for Vertigo's second tranche of three releases, someone had failed to deliver masters for VO6. So they signed Black Sabbath as a makeweight, because we had finished masters which could be delivered in a hurry.

Tony Iommi: I remember we got a poxy £400 for signing, and a crap royalty rate, but we really weren't bothered about the money, because we didn't have any money anyway.

* * *

On October 22, nearly 300 days after their first album, Jimmy Page and co released *Led Zeppelin II*. Both heavier and more textured than their debut, it far outstripped the success of its predecessor. Their label, Atlantic, received advance orders of 400,000 copies – nearly 10 times as many as *Led Zeppelin*. It peaked at No.1 in both the UK and the US. The musical revolution they had started had now officially gone worldwide.

Jimmy Page: That album captured the energy of being on the road. That's what I like about it. That record and the period around it seems like a tidal wave now.

Robert Plant: That was the album that was going to dictate whether or not we had the staying power and the capacity to stimulate. It was still blues-based, but it was a much more carnal approach to the music and quite flamboyant.

Charlie Watts (the Rolling Stones): I call that tour [the Stones' Winter 1969 US tour] the Led Zeppelin tour, because it was the first time we had to go on and play for an hour-and-a-half. I blame it on Jimmy Page. Led Zeppelin had come to the States, and they would do a twenty-minute drum solo and endless guitar solos.

Freddie Mercury (writing to his flatmate in 1969): "Just heard *Zeppelin II* LP and it's a knock-out. Saw them at the Lyceum and they were really great."

* * *

PART 6: WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS
OCTOBER 1969… AND BEYOND

In the wake of Zeppelin's success, a growing army of new bands began picking up their lead. In Birmingham, singer Al Atkins formed Judas Priest. In London, fledgling band Hocus Pocus changed their name to UFO. Hard rock, heavy rock, heavy metal – call it what you will, but it was here to stay. Music had changed forever.

Al Atkins: Our bass player, Bruno Stapenhill, came up with the name from the Bob Dylan song *The Ballad Of Frankie Lee And Judas Priest*. I was never a fan of Heep or UFO. I didn't play in bands with keyboards. Black Sabbath was the style that we wanted to go in, writing bigger and bigger riffs.

Neil Warnock: As 1969 went on, the heavier bands started to take off in the Marquee in Soho, the Greyhound in Croydon, the Wake Arms in Epping… We all know that this kind of music is all about the blue-collar working man having a beer and a bit of sound. That's where it found its audience. By the end of the year, if one of those emerging heavy bands came out of a gig with £100 they'd think that was a result. But it was those bands, Sabbath, Deep Purple and their like, that provided my core income in the next decade.

Mick Box: I don't remember hearing the term 'heavy metal'. It's just a term used by journalists – no offence. Okay, things got heavier, but to me all of it was good rock music.

Ken Hensley: It felt like we were part of something that was very exciting. A real energy was building, not just among the bands, and we spent time with Purple, Sabbath and the rest on tour. We also did many shows with Led Zeppelin – but with the kids as well. It was that post-Vietnam time when everyone was looking for something new and different. It all combined to make the thing like an unstoppable train.

Edgar Broughton: I was aware that this heavy music was attracting its own cult following. And there was a bit of a 'them and us' thing about it as well. Some of them wouldn't listen to anything else. A lot of the bands that came up under the Led Zeppelin thing were just buying into a formula, really. You know, playing certain chords because they knew it would get a reaction.

Ian Paice (drummer, Deep Purple): It was a breakaway from what was acceptable and normal, that's for sure, but within a year it had become the norm. Every kid looked like that and listened to the same form of music. It's amazing how quickly fashion can take hold of public taste to be adapted by a whole generation.

Mick Box: If I'm perfectly honest, it really *was* that good. It was a vibrant, wonderful time. There were venues aplenty, the fashion thing was going on… I thank God I was born at just the right time to be a part of it.

Additional Sources: NME, Sounds, Q, The Concert File by Dave Lewis and Simon Pallett.
Black Sabbath: Symptom Of The Universe by Mick Wall is out now on Orion Books.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"I FELT LIKE WE WERE PART OF SOMETHING VERY EXCITING. A REAL ENERGY WAS BUILDING. IT WAS LIKE AN UNSTOPPABLE TRAIN."

KEN HENSLEY, URIAH HEEP

GETTY X2

Leaders of the pack: Zeppelin were the ones who really set the 'birth of heavy' ball rolling.

RON RAFFAELLI

℗ 1970
33⅓
SIDE A (over)
1. BLACK SABBATH
2. THE WIZARD
3. BEHIND THE WALL OF SLEEP
4. N.I.B.
VO 6
SIDE B
1. EVIL WOMAN
2. SLEEPING VILLAGE
3. WARNING (Dunbar)
BLACK SABBATH
VERTIGO
This is the NIGHT of the NIGHTMARE!
...when a headless corpse rides the cold night wind...
when a woman's soul inhabits the body of a buzzing Fly!
AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL
BORIS KARLOFF
Black Sabbath
...The most gruesome day in the calendar of the Undead!
PATHECOLOR

BLACK SABBATH: the original metal album and the movie that inspired the band name...

IRON MEN

It was the end of the 60s. Flower power, blues rock and psychedelia ruled the airwaves. But four lads from Birmingham were making sounds that reflected their lives. Darker, heavier and, like, metaller. In just one day, they recorded an album that would change the face of music forever. This is Black Sabbath…

Words: Malcolm Dome.

It took a day to record. The producer on this project was making his debut in such a role. The studio was a four-track. And the whole thing cost less than one VIP ticket for a Bon Jovi show in London this June. Yet, in 1970, this unprepossessing and rather low-key debut album altered the world as we knew it. We're talking, of course, about the self-titled debut album from Black Sabbath. This was where heavy metal breathed for the first time, staring down the burning sun of commercial realism and blinding succeeding generations with an uncompromising darkness of thought, deed and riff.

"We were different to anything around at the time," says guitarist Tony Iommi, 40 years after its release. "While everyone else was still wrapped up in the hippy and psychedelic ideas of the 1960s, this was something new."

"We were four local lads. I went to school with Tony. I was in a band with Geezer Butler," adds Ozzy Osbourne. "When we started, we had everything to gain and nothing to lose. It was my way out of working in a factory for the rest of my life."

Their music didn't come out of nowhere. The roots of metal had already taken hold and started to bear fruit. The riff to The Kinks' 1964 hit single *You Really Got Me*, for instance. The 1968 debut album from Blue Cheer, *Vincebus Eruptum*, and the Iron Butterfly record *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* from the same year. A fascination with magick and the supernatural had imbued Led Zeppelin's work, and could even be traced back to the blues. But nobody had done something quite so distorted, original and musically so morose. Black Sabbath gave birth here to the beast, and we all embraced a new, gloomy vision.

"What set us apart from everyone else were our lyrics," explains drummer Bill Ward. "There were a lot of great bands at the time – Zeppelin, Deep Purple, for instance – but none had those morbid lyrics like us. It's what defined the band, made us unique."

Sabbath had started out under the name of The Polka Tulk Blues Company in 1968. It was the combination of refugees from a Carlisle band called Mythology (Tony, Bill) and Rare Breed (vocalist Ozzy Osbourne and bassist Geezer). Located in the Aston area of Birmingham and augmented by slide guitarist Jimmy Phillips and saxophonist Alan Clarke, they were a heavy blues band, who quickly became Polka Tulk, and then Earth. By which point Jimmy Phillips and Alan Clarke were gone. "In those days, Birmingham was a real hothouse for blues bands," explains Geezer. "There were loads of places to get gigs. But just about the only rock venue was Henry's Blues House, above a pub in the middle of Birmingham. Everyone played there."

This was run by Jim Simpson, who was to become the band's manager and who, in 1969, packed them off to play regularly in Germany, especially at the Star Club in Hamburg, made famous earlier in the decade by the Beatles.

"We'd play up to nine sets a day," laughs Geezer. "They were all about 45 minutes long, and as we didn't have many songs we learnt to do extended versions, to introduce drum and guitar solos. That's how we started to jam a lot, and from where a lot of the material on the first album was developed."

By this time, the band survived the temporary loss of Tony, recruited by emerging prog heroes Jethro Tull. He lasted long enough to do one TV show, The Rolling Stones' *Rock And Roll Circus*, before deciding their approach wasn't for him, and returned to Earth.

The problem was that, while the band were building a healthy following on the live circuit, they weren't at all attractive to record companies.

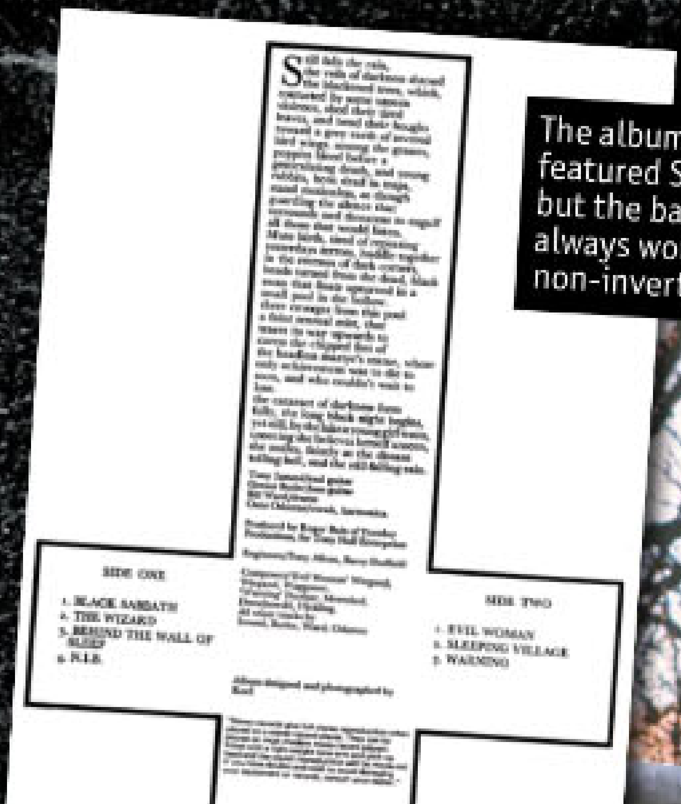
"We were turned down by several at the time," says Tony "I think they felt we were too way out for them. Jim Simpson then decided that our songs weren't commercial enough, and what was needed was an outside writer."

So enter one Norman Haines. He'd made his name with another Birmingham band called Locomotive, who released a progressive-style album in 1969 entitled *We Are Everything You See* (now something of a collector's item). They'd also had a hit single with *Rudi's In Love*. However, the band had split up by the time Jim Simpson asked keyboardist Norman Haines if he'd be interested in joining Earth, thereby giving them some commercial beef. The offer was rejected, but instead Norman wrote the band a song called *The Rebel*.

Before their next move could be made, the band had to change their name. Another British act called Earth, who played pop and Motown covers, were playing the C-list circuit and this forced the band into a rethink. Yet they had this song, you see, and, well… it was going to become the band's own defining moment.

"The song came first," says Bill. "It was doomy, dark and very influenced by the supernatural. But what it didn't have was a title. So, one day Geezer suggested we call it *Black Sabbath*, after a horror movie [from 1963, starring Boris Karloff]."

Not only did this solve the problem of what to title the tune, but it became the



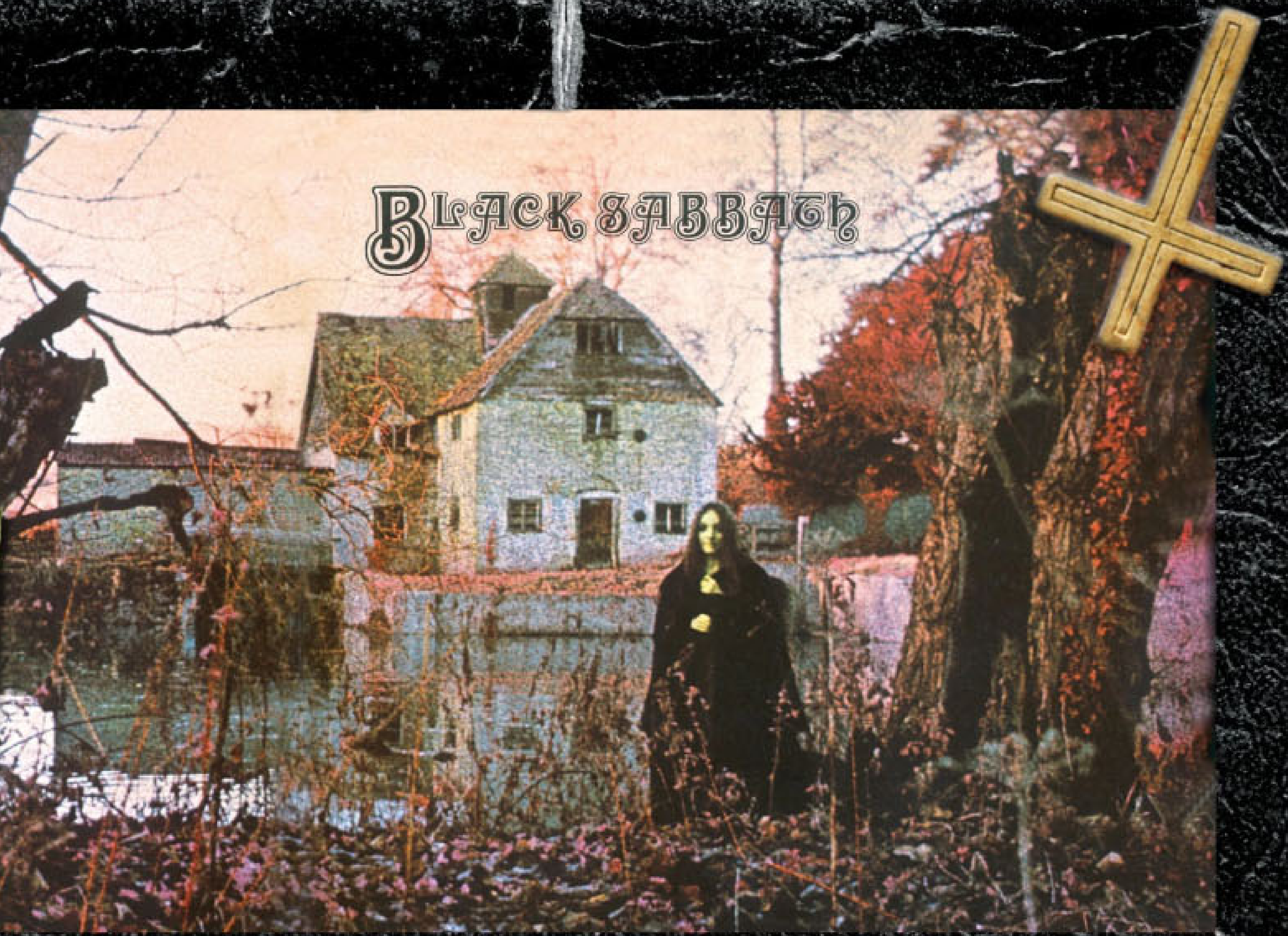
SIDE ONE

1. BLACK SABBATH
2. THE WIZARD
3. BEHIND THE WALL OF SLEEP
4. N.I.B.

SIDE TWO

1. EVIL WOMAN
2. SLEEPING VILLAGE
3. WARNING

The album artwork featured Satanic imagery but the band themselves always wore regular, non-inverted crosses.



That location: visit it at Mapledurham Watermill near Reading at RG4 7TR. See www.mapledurhamwatermill.co.uk for opening times

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℗ 1970
33⅓
SIDE A (over)
1. BLACK SABBATH
2. THE WIZARD
3. BEHIND THE WALL OF SLEEP
4. N.I.B.
SIDE B
1. EVIL WOMAN
2. SLEEPING VILLAGE
3. WARNING (Dunbar)
VO 6
BLACK SABBATH
VERTIGO

> *"It was the way things were done in those days. All we could do was set up in this small room, and play the songs through once"*
>
> TONY IOMMI

band's name. And on August 22, 1969, the newly anointed Black Sabbath went into Trident Studios in London's Soho area to record a demo of *The Rebel*, with Norman Haines himself sitting in on piano and organ. The session was produced by Gus Dudgeon and engineered by Rodger Bain. In all, an amazing 19 takes were done of this song.

"Gus Dudgeon tried to tell us what to do," says Ozzy. "And, if you knew us back then you'd understand that when we got ordered to do something a certain way, then we'd deliberately fuck it up. Gus was lucky that Tony didn't wrap his guitar round his head!"

The ploy of using an outside writer didn't work. The band also recorded another Norman Haines song, *When I Come Down* (sometimes called *When I Came Down*), but Jim Simpson couldn't get Sabbath signed, which doesn't surprise Bill. "They didn't work, because it wasn't us. We felt uncomfortable and it shows through on the demos. We were far happier with our own material, which was very different to these songs."

In a final act of desperation, and inspiration, Jim Simpson elected to make a bold move. He did a deal with producer and one-time jazz critic Tony Hall, who'd co-hosted a short-lived late-1950s music TV series called *Oh Boy!* – almost a precursor to *Top Of The Pops*. It was agreed that Hall would put up the money for Sabbath to do an album, and then try to sell the results to a record company.

"I think Tony Hall gave us £1,000," says Geezer. "We each got £100 to pay off debts, and the rest went to pay for the album – £600. It sounds like nothing these days!"

"I thought I was rich," adds Ozzy. "I spent some of the money on a pair of shoes. I used to go around barefoot, because I literally couldn't afford shoes."

On November 10, 1969, the band went back to Trident to have another go at recording a commercial cover. The song chosen this time was *Evil Woman (Don't You Play Your Games With Me)*.

"This had been a hit in America for a band called Crow [reaching #19]," says Bill of the choice. "To be brutal, none of us liked the song and we didn't wanna do it. But what did we know? Jim Simpson and Tony Hall felt it could do us some good, so we reluctantly went along with it."

In those days, a lot of British acts were cajoled into covering recent American hits, getting their versions out before the original in the UK.

This was to be the one track on the Black Sabbath album recorded separately to the bulk of the songs. It was done back at Trident Studios, with Barry Sheffield (who co-owned the studio) as engineer and Rodger Bain as the producer.

"I don't think Gus Dudgeon enjoyed working with us on *The Rebel*," laughs Tony. "He didn't seem to get what we were about, and apparently turned down the offer of working with us again."

"My recollection is that we didn't get on with Gus at all; he was always so critical of what we were doing," adds Geezer. "We didn't want him to do anything more for us. I know we met a couple of potential producers, but we liked Rodger Bain, because he had the right attitude. He wanted to record us live in the studio, to do it as if it were a gig. That's the way we wanted to work, as we had no clue about studio technology."

So, on November 17, 1969, the band went to Regent Sound Studios in London to record the album. They literally had one day to do it all.

"Well, there was one day set aside to mix it, but we had to get all our parts done on that first day," sighs Tony "It was the way things were done in those days. We had no choice. All we could do was set up in this small room, and play the songs through. Mind you, it played to our strengths, because by then we were a really good live band.

"We had to be really careful to make sure there were no mistakes, otherwise they might end up staying on the record. As I recall, we did have the luxury of doing one or two songs for a second time. But that was it."

"Tony did get to do a couple of overdubs on guitar, but when we asked all we got from Rodger and Tom [Allom, engineer] were sighs of frustration," smiles Geezer at the recollection. "Time was so tight. Then when Ozzy asked if he could do a few additional vocals, he was told, 'No, sorry, time's up. Now fuck off!'"

And that was the end of the band's involvement with the album. The next day they left on a ferry, to play shows in Switzerland, while Rodger Bain and Tom Allom mixed the tracks.

"To be honest, I doubt we'd have had anything useful to contribute at that stage," admits Tony. "What did we know about mixing? All we'd have done is sit there and annoy everyone by asking for the thing to be turned up!"

"What you hear on the song *Black Sabbath* – the bell and all those effects – had nothing to do with us," reveals Ozzy. "They were added after we'd left for the ferry. The first time we heard the mix was when we played the finished album."

Not only were Sabbath absent for the mix, but they had nothing whatsoever to do with the sequencing of the tracks on the final record.

"That was done by the label," remarks Geezer. "If it had been left to us, then the chances are that we'd have opened up with something like *Warning*. Maybe it's better we weren't asked!"

The Artwork

"The *Black Sabbath* cover was designed by one Marcus Keef, who was employed by Vertigo Records at the time. The location was Mapledurham Watermill, in Oxfordshire, on the River Thames. Marcus added in the mystery woman in the forefront, with a cat just visible between her and the tree. And a raven is there on the back cover – giving the whole thing an eerie, gothic feel.

"I remember seeing the artwork for the first time and thinking, 'That's just fucking incredible'," says Ozzy. "It did the job so well."

The UK release was in a gatefold sleeve, which featured an inverted cross on the inside, with a poem that was both horrific and rather violent.

"The poem came from the label," reveals Tony Iommi. "I'm not sure who actually wrote it, though."

In America, the record wasn't released in such a lavish gatefold, and subsequent pressings over here also dispensed with this, but not because the band were upset by the inverted cross, as has been previously suggested.

"None of us were bothered by it, as I recall," believes Ozzy. "I'm not sure why people thought we were annoyed."

Mapledurham Watermill was also used in the 1976 film *The Eagle Has Landed*.

The Studio

Apart from *Evil Woman (Don't You Play Your Games With Me)*, the whole of the Black Sabbath album was recorded and mixed at Regent Sound Studios in Central London – but not the one still located in Denmark Street, as many Sabbath fans misguidedly assume.

"There was a second Regent Sound in those days, based in University Street, just off Tottenham Court Road," recalls Tom Allom. "It was a four-track studio, and we mostly used it for demos, although there were some important recordings done there."

Apart from Sabbath, the Beatles recorded the song *Fixing A Hole* (from the *Sgt. Pepper* album), and The Who went there for the album *A Quick One*, their first rock opera.

"The reason Sabbath came down to that studio was because of a company called Essex Music," says Tom. "They were a publishing company, and Tony Hall was closely connected with them. Usually, they'd put their bands either with Trident or with us."

Tony Iommi remembers Regent Sound being "very small. But it did the job for us. There was enough room for us to set up the equipment and play live in the room. Really, we didn't need anything more than that."

> *"That album was so special, and changed all of our lives forever. Whatever we've been lucky enough to do, we owe it to that record. It's just magic. I can't put it better than that"*
> **OZZY OSBOURNE**

"'Bite the head off it?' You must be joking. Why would I do that?"

> "I used to go around barefoot at the time, because I literally couldn't afford shoes"
> OZZY OSBOURNE

The aforementioned song was a cover of a track first recorded a couple of years earlier by a British band called The Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation, and it's something the bassist had brought to the band.

"It was a great blues song to jam on. I'd first done it when I was in Rare Breed, and really that's where we developed the ideas which eventually came together on *N.I.B.*"

It is astonishing to realise just how little Black Sabbath had to do with their own debut album. But Tony shrugs off the situation with a philosophical attitude.

"We didn't know any better back then – it was the way things were done. The labels had so much control. Our part was to record the songs, and then leave the rest to them."

"We had no experience of anything, except playing live," says Ozzy. "Jim Simpson just said to us, 'On your way to catching the ferry over to Switzerland, stop off at Regent Sound and record your album.' It was almost an afterthought."

Armed with the tapes, Tony Hall managed to persuade Philips to sign up the band, releasing *Evil Woman...* as a single on January 9, 1970, through their Fontana subsidiary. It didn't chart, and it was another Philips label, the newly formed Vertigo, that put out the album in the UK, on February 13, 1970 – appropriately enough a Friday. And this time, things happened fast, with the record reaching number eight in the charts, much to everyone's surprise.

"We didn't even hear or see the album before it was released!" admits Tony. "The first we knew was when we got back from Europe, switched on the radio and heard *Evil Woman...* It was us. On the radio. That was exciting. But we were never sent the mixes of the tracks, nor shown the artwork in advance. Nothing. Mind you, it was a lot harder back then to get anything to a band on the road."

"I remember Jim Simpson telling me that the album had made the charts. I didn't fucking believe it," laughs Ozzy. "I hadn't even played the record at that point, and I had no idea what it sounded like. So, I took a copy home to my mum and dad's place, and put it on their record player. I recall my dad listening to it and saying to me, 'Are you sure all you're having is the occasional drink?' That was hilarious! I was off my face all the fucking time. I must have overdosed every day back then."

The man who signed Sabbath to Vertigo was label boss Olav Wyper, who'd actually seen Sabbath once – by accident.

"I'd gone up to Birmingham for a meeting but got the wrong day. At a loose end, I went to a local club just to pass the time. The place was packed and there was this incredible band playing: Black Sabbath. Right then I knew I wanted them."

In America, the album was released on June 30, and got to Number 23 on the charts. Much to everyone's amazement. One slight change was that *Evil Woman...* was dropped, in favour of another original, *Wicked World*, which had been the B-side of that first British single.

"It was actually the first song we ever wrote after we'd changed the band name to Black Sabbath," says Bill. "Tony Iommi had this riff he'd come up with when we still were in Mythology."

The centrepiece of the album was the title track – a formidable epic that builds to a deafeningly dark crescendo. As Bill says, it's the band's anthem.

"If you listen to that song, then for me it represents everything about heavy metal," insists Geezer. "It's all there – the whole genre in one song. I got the idea from an incident when I woke up one night and there was a mysterious black shape at the end of my bed, just standing there. It so freaked me out that I told Ozzy about it the next day, and he came up with the lyrics. I was really into the supernatural and spiritualism, and things like that happened to me all the time."

What drove the album was the unique instrumentation – with Tony's guitar sound especially – becoming a signature.

"I wanted as much distortion as possible, when everyone else was going for a clean sound. It used to horrify amplifier companies, because they didn't get what I was on about. Everyone was trying to reduce the distortion, whereas I was going the other way."

"Bands ask me all the time how I got my bass sound," says Geezer, "because they wanna copy it. That's easy. Just have three speakers in a four-speaker cabinet, and turn everything up so loud that you blow the lot!"

The reaction to the album at the time was mixed. While some loved it, others were far from convinced. Tony recalls one particularly vehement critic of the record.

"I read at the time about Roger Waters from Pink Floyd's attitude. He utterly loathed what we'd done. He thought the album was utter crap, and predicted that both it and us would quickly disappear. I must admit that made me laugh at the time – and still does.

"What do I think of the album now? I like it. Yes, it could have been better, and I can hear things that shouldn't be on there. But you can say the same about any of our records. What it does do is capture the energy and power of the band back then. And there are people trying today to get the same atmosphere."

Perhaps it's Ozzy Osbourne who best sums up what the album means, and why it's become the holy grail for metal.

"You know, the four of us have fallen out over the years. But all I need to do is go back and listen to this album to realise just how much I love the other three. It's just magic. I can't put it better than that. I've been lucky in my career to have played with some great musicians.

"But, with due respect to all of them, this was the best of times for me. That album was so special, and changed all of our lives forever.

"Whatever I've been lucky enough to do, and the same goes for the other three guys, we owe it to that record. There were no egos, just four friends who meant the world to one another."

The Producer

"I liked Rodger Bain. He had a great sense of humour and loved wearing sneakers. So did I back then!"

That's the way Bill Ward chooses to remember the man who produced the first three Black Sabbath albums. Rodger was chosen for the first record, even though he had no previous experience as a producer.

He'd go on to work with the likes of 70s metal bands Judas Priest and Budgie later in the decade, but in recent years has not only left the music industry, but has become something of a recluse.

"He won't even talk to me," sighs Tom Allom, who was the engineer on those early Black Sabbath records. "It's as if Rodger sees his whole involvement with rock music as being embarrassing. But he was excellent to work with."

Tom, who subsequently has produced Priest and Def Leppard, had an interesting immediate reaction to Sabbath.

"I thought they made an unholy racket! But then I realised that they were very tight and good musicians. They certainly knew what they were doing, and on that first session just got on with playing. I was impressed with their professionalism, and also their originality. I didn't realise at the time, but they were so innovative."

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THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

Mountain

Nantucket Sleighride (To Owen Coffin)

A fictional account of a frightening real-life event, the sprawling title track of their 1971 album, it now holds bitter-sweet memories for surviving members of the band.

Words: **Max Bell**

When Mountain went into the Record Plant studios in autumn 1970 to put the finishing touches to their second album, there were already mutterings within the camp that bass player/producer Felix Pappalardi and his girlfriend (later wife) Gail Collins were exerting a stranglehold on the band's output. When the band played at the Woodstock festival in 1969, it was only their fourth gig together. Their debut album, 1970's *Mountain Climbing!*, had been a pretty democratic affair, with drummer Corky Laing providing the initial idea for its hit single, *Mississippi Queen*, with cowbell intro and David Rea's lyric.

The follow-up, *Nantucket Sleighride*, was much darker, with *Tired Angels* (a morbid, *Lord Of The Rings*-influenced tribute to Jimi Hendrix), the claustrophobic, curse-like *My Lady* and *The Great Train Robbery*, which depicted the infamous villains behind the 1963 heist as outlaw heroes.

Those tracks paled into insignificance next to the title track, a fictional account of a true episode involving 19th-century whaling ship The Essex, which left Nantucket on an ill-starred hunt that ended in cannibalism.

Leslie West recalls the song with mixed feelings: "Felix came up with the idea, and Gail wrote the lyrics. Owen Coffin was the youngest guy in the long boat they sent to harpoon the sperm whale. They got dragged out to sea and were close to starvation, so they drew straws, and the kid got the short one. They ate him. The term 'a Nantucket Sleighride' refers to the whale diving deep with harpoons in its back, then flying to the surface and pulling the long boats out at speed."

Collins's lyrics glossed over the grislier details but her subtext was ingenious. West: "The opening lines, *'Goodbye, little Robin-Marie, don't try following me / Don't cry little Robin-Marie, 'cos you know I'm coming home soon,'* were about herself and addressed the fact that Felix was cheating with a girl called Robin-Marie. They had a weird dynamic, him and Gail, and I didn't think much of it to begin with when things were great. Felix is talented, his wife writes the words, she does the artwork, she takes the photos of the group, designs the stage outfits, yada yada, and it's all easy enough. Then it became too much. It was like when Yoko came along to The Beatles and Paul said, 'Oh no.'"

Leslie wasn't taken with the track. "I hated it at first because it was so fucking hard to play. There were intricate chords, not your usual four-trick pony, heavy riffs, a pretty section where Felix used a tiny keyboard like an accordion, and a recorder part for what shoulda been a flute in the middle eight. I was young and impatient at the time, and it was hard to learn the thing. It was more than your average classic rock blues song. Now I love playing it and I finish all my shows with it. Felix sang it originally. Sometimes I think of him. I never think of Gail."

> **"I was young and impatient at the time, and it was hard to learn the thing. It was more than your average classic rock blues song."**

West found it hard to relate to *Nantucket Sleighride* for other reasons. "I didn't even know where Nantucket was! Felix and Gail were living there at the time, and he was writing a lot of stuff about Massachusetts, but I had no knowledge of the place or its history. So even while we were recording I was in the dark, especially in the studio where all the heavy sessions had to flow into each other."

Under Pappalardi's notoriously exacting instruction, the big man finally nailed it "when I came up with the riff in the middle. Then I was happier."

West first heard the finished album in January 1971. "I was living in London at The Inn On The Park on Hyde Park and picked up a copy. I was so fucking pissed off! Gail's name was all over the cover. Felix and her called all the shots. I was just the lead guitarist and sometimes the lead singer, but she was listed in so many different places it was ridiculous. Even on the cover art she drew herself – just like on the first album she painted herself standing in front of a mountain. I hadn't realised it before, but then it hit me and left a very bad taste in my mouth."

Nantucket Sleighride became a focal point of Mountain's live set. "It was very popular; the big number, we closed the shows with it. It was a nightly jam, really. I wanted us to be like a heavy rock orchestra band, so I made my guitar sound like a violin, a viola and a cello."

Sleighride became Mountain's best-known song in Britain thanks to ITV's current affairs programme, *Weekend World*, which used it as theme music, specifically a tub-thumping section that gives way to an organ motif played by the late Steve Knight.

In the end *Nantucket Sleighride* would hold bitter-sweet memories for West, after Gail shot and killed Felix in 1983.

"There were terrible problems with heroin in Mountain. In the beginning they were a great husband and wife team, but when the dope started she got the hook in him and it was out of control. It went from really good to, 'What the fuck is going on?!' Heroin ruined the band for sure, and throwing Gail into the mix made it even worse.

"Hopefully the fans didn't know about all that bullshit. But when you go behind the music and understand the power of the flowers of evil you see how awful it became. It took me years to recover from that period and it took a toll. I paid a heavy price." ❶

Leslie West's most recent album, Soundcheck, is out now on Mascot.

SHOOTING STAR
West hasn't spoken to Gail Collins since the court trial for the death of Felix Pappalardi (pictured). "She should have been convicted of second-degree murder, but she beat the rap when the jury decided it was criminally negligent homicide. She got off light because she said Felix was giving her a gun lesson – he'd been a marksman in the army – after he'd come home from having an affair. He was sitting on the bed and she shot him at blank range in the neck. First thing she did was call her lawyer, not 911.

"Hey, buy your wife some flowers and chocolates or a push-up bra. Don't ever give her a Derringer."

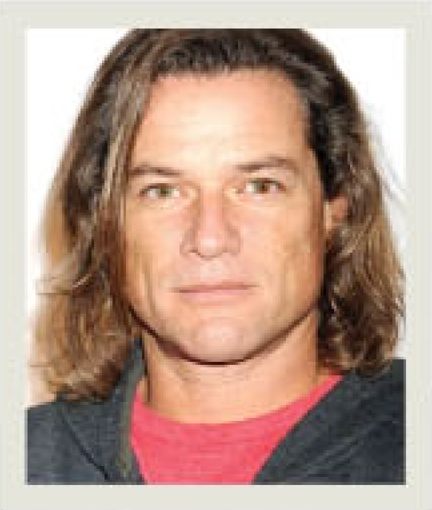
INSET: GETTY; MAIN: SHUTTERSTOCK

Mountain at their peak: (l to r) Felix Pappalardi, and Leslie West.

THE 10 BEST JUDAS PRIEST SONGS

1974-1984

Ten reasons why **Ugly Kid Joe** frontman Whitfield Crane loves Judas Priest. Probably more than life itself.



His connection to the band is more than long-distance hero worship. Judas Priest frontman Rob Halford appeared on Ugly Kid Joe's 1992 debut album, *America's Least Wanted* and Crane paid it forward by singing on Glenn Tipton's solo album, *Baptizm Of Fire*, five years later.

We asked Crane to pick the 10 best Judas Priest songs from their entire back catalogue – but he went one further and focused solely on the band's recorded output from their 1974 debut, *Rocka Rolla* to 1984's *Defenders Of The Faith*.

Says the vocalist: "I'm a Priest freak, so just picking 10 is hard. And it doesn't really matter what the order is as Priest rules across the board, but here goes…"

10. VICTIM OF CHANGES

SAD WINGS OF DESTINY, 1976

This record is Priest's magnum opus for sure. When you hear those initial guitars swell in, and you hear Rob Halford's screams and magic throughout this song, put on a seat belt because you'll be blown away. Imagine me in high school, not particularly excited about the scholastic side of life, finding various bands like Judas Priest for the first time. Then imagine me hearing *Victim of Changes* for the first time – it changed my life, without a doubt.

9. DREAMER DECEIVER

SAD WINGS OF DESTINY, 1976

This song is so incredible as far as patience and vocal majesty goes. I've always wanted to sing or play guitar or do something in a band, and I would sit in my room at my mother's house practicing how to sing along to this song over and over again. To this day, if you find me in like a little tunnel that goes under a train track or something – basically anywhere that echoes – I'm going to be singing this song because it's so fucking gnarly. And if you want to, peel that onion and try to figure out what Halford's talking about with the lyrics; it's beautiful and dark.

Judas Priest: back when Halford had hair...

8. BEYOND THE REALMS OF DEATH

STAINED CLASS, 1978

I would advise anybody to go ahead and get a lyric sheet or Google the words to *Beyond the Realms of Death*. There are a lot of subtleties to Rob Halford's lyrics –about who he is and how he is – and at the time of this song he couldn't really be who he was to a certain level. He sings some incredibly painful themes here. There's one lyric that says, *'Yeah I've left the world behind / I am safe here in my mind / Free to speak with my own kind / This is my life, this is my life / I'll decide, not you.'* He also says, *'Keep the world with all its sins / It's not fit for living.'* I mean, that's so fucking awesome. And then at the very end of the song, Glenn Tipton hits this crazy feedback note that could be the best guitar sound you're ever going to hear in heavy metal. It's so good, and he still does it live to this day.

7. RAPID FIRE

BRITISH STEEL, 1980

Sonically, *British Steel* is the best Priest album for me. It's so raw, and so fucking great. The whole album is sick. But when Halford goes and jams with Metallica, they sing this song. That's the one they always agree on. And it's almost punk rock, really. It's a brutal song too.

6. HEADING OUT TO THE HIGHWAY

POINT OF ENTRY, 1981

Even if you don't really understand Judas Priest and you don't get it, you could show this song to anyone and they'd realise they're listening to a perfect song. It's really amazing, and it makes you want to get up and move. I love the whole statement and the vision of the song: *'If you get it wrong, at least you can know / There's miles and miles to put it back together.'* Meaning, you can just leave and go to another town or another country, or another space even – just get on your bike and head out to the highway!

5. THE HELLION/ ELECTRIC EYE

SCREAMING FOR VENGEANCE, 1982

This is when Priest peaked. I didn't see this tour, but I heard about it. Can you imagine it? It was Priest and Iron Maiden sharing the same bill. This was when both of these bands took over the world. Growing up, my friend Charlie and I would come home every day – after school, during school, whatever – and we'd watch a VHS tape of that tour, smoke big bong hits, and bow down to the Priest.

Metal gods: the classic line-up strike a classic pose.

4. RUN OF THE MILL

ROCKA ROLLA, 1974

When I was living in Santa Barbara in probably around 1995, I was drinking and carrying on and listening to this song so intensely. And by this point, I knew all the Priest guys, because Rob had sung on the first Ugly Kid Joe record (*America's Least Wanted*) and I had his phone number. So I was sitting there a little crazy, just really feeling this song, and at the very end of it Halford is singing so high, and so beautifully and emotionally, but I couldn't quite hear what he was saying. And this was before the Internet, so I couldn't find the lyrics anywhere. But I was like, 'Fuck, I've gotta know what he's saying' because I totally felt it, so I called him up. He picked up the phone and I was ranting at him, and he was all like, 'Calm down, Whit. Calm down.' And I was like, 'What are you saying on this song? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?' I had to know. And he was so rad; he was like a beautiful English Rolodex file of lyrics, and he went, 'Hold on a second, let me think.' And then in his rad Rob Halford speaking voice, he goes – and these are the lyrics – *'Now with the aid of your new walking stick / You hobble along through society thick / And look mesmerised by the face of it all / You keep to the gutter in case you fall / I can't go on.'* This song makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Listen to it now – your whole body will just freak out.

3. FREEWHEEL BURNING

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH, 1984

This was their follow-up album to *Screaming For Vengeance*, which was something hard to top, and they really put a great effort forth with *Defenders Of The Faith*. Funnily enough, I'm pretty sure this song was before a lot of rap and definitely before any rap-metal or anything like that, but there's a bit in the song when Rob Halford kind of raps – it's great.

Mark Dodson engineered this record, so when Ugly Kid Joe came off that successful first EP (*As Ugly As They Wanna Be*) and we had some wind in the sails and could pick cool producers for the first record, all I heard was, 'You could work with this guy, Mark Dodson. He did Judas Priest.' And I was like, 'Well, that's the guy I want.'

I wanted anybody who had been near Priest, anybody that had shared space with them. I'm fortunate to get to sit down with the old masters and wizards and get them to tell me stories of what they were doing and how they were doing it – you can imagine those dudes in their heyday out in Ibiza, just partying and doing their shit. But *Freewheel Burning* is just a venomous, crazy, punky song. And it rules.

2. CHEATER

ROCKA ROLLA, 1974

This is the most obscure Priest song, and if you talk to true Priest fans they'll know what this song is – if they're well-versed and obsessed with Judas Priest all the way back to *Rocka Rolla*. So here's the thing; there's only two songs for Judas Priest that have a harmonica in them. And this song's one of them. It's called *Cheater*, and it's almost like a country song. You have to hear it to believe it, and it's so cool because it's about coming home from work and finding your girl with another man. The lyrics are, *'They both pleaded for mercy, I said 'No Way' / When you do this upon me you have no say / I treated you so real good and this is what you do / Oh no, I've finished with you, your time is through.'* It's so rad. And once again the thing to keep an eye out for is a harmonica. Now, when a lot of younger kids think of Priest they think of *Painkiller*, like this crazy double bass metal band – which they are and they're the kings of it – but when I think of Priest I think of these obscure, old school magnificent songs when they were finding their metallic way. Now bands back then, whether they were Priest or AC/DC or Sabbath or whatever, they had time to become themselves. If you made it to that third or fourth record, you really had time to become an amazing band. And half of these songs that I've picked are Priest doing that.

1. NEVER SATISFIED

ROCKA ROLLA, 1974

I first heard this song on the *Hero Hero* record (a compilation of early Judas Priest recordings released in between *British Steel* and *Point Of Entry* in 1981), which may be an obscure record if you're not a crazy Priest fan, but this was before Priest really knew who they were – and when I say who they were, I mean found their leather and their formula. This was when they were still dressing like thespians and finding their ground. But if you listen to the time signatures throughout *Never Satisfied*, they're incredible. They're also patient, and to me they're vintage Priest!

Judas Priest's new album Firepower is out in March. Priest headline Bloodstock festival in August

Cracking the whip: band leader and metal poet Rob Halford.

GETTY IMAGES X4

WORDS: **PETER MAKOWSKI** PORTRAIT: **ROSS HALFIN**

SURVIVAL

Whether it's thinking about changing their name to Stalingrad, titling their album *Virgin Killer* or filling their big hit single with lots of whistling, there's always a sting in the **Scorpions**' tale. But against the odds the veteran German band are back on the blitzkrieg once more.

The year is 1972. The place is Cologne, Germany. The Scorpions are in the recording studio, about to lay down their debut album, *Lonesome Crow*, with producer Conny Plank. But first they have an important decision to make. Do they remain the Scorpions (that's 'the' all in small letters to be accurate and pedantic), a name that came with founder member, songwriter and guitarist Rudolf Schenker from a band he formed in 1965? Or do they go for a new moniker and image to celebrate the new line-up and a fresh start?

Conny, already well known for creating the krautrock sound – having worked with the likes of Kraftwerk, Cluster and Neu! – has some definite ideas about their image and direction.

"We knew if we wanted to change something we'd better do it now," recalls vocalist Klaus Meine. "Scorpions we thought was alright, but there were names like Led Zeppelin and Jefferson Starship, and we thought our name sounded too simple. So Conny said: 'Let's find something more aggressive – how about Stalingrad?'

"He wanted us to dress up in army uniforms and then storm on to to the stage! I think he wanted to make us into an early Rammstein, with a theatrical show."

Meine pauses and raises his eyes as if in disbelief that this event actually ever happened. "So we stuck to our original name. And, looking back, I think it was the right decision."

Thirty-five years later and the Scorpions are still rocking like a hurricane in a ruthless business that saw off punk in the 70s, shot down hairspray rock in the 80s and annihilated grunge in the 90s. They have survived the current music industry meltdown by being one of the hardest-working live bands on the circuit, consistently conquering

The Scorp-oration, 2007: (l to r) Rudolf Schenker, James Kottak, Klaus Meine, Pawel Maciwoda and Matthias Jabs.

INSTINCT

new, uncharted markets which so far this year include Mongolia and China.

While other equally established groups have gone into panic mode and taken the easier route of producing lamentable covers albums or touring a greatest hits show (or even doing both) the Scorpions have invested their own money and time into the production of a new album. *Humanity – Hour 1* was made under the guidance of über producer/songwriter Desmond Child and is an effort to re-establish their rock credentials. This, coupled with a recent appearance at the Wacken Festival which reunited them with most of their former members in a spectacular three-and-a-half-hour show, marks a return to form for the band. A band who had been abandoned by their more hard-core following for producing some execrable rock ballads – the main offender being *Wind Of Change* with its lamentable Roger Whittaker-esque whistling. But more of that later.

First I have to admit that the mighty Scorps had fallen off my musical radar for about 24 years. The last time we met was during the recording of *Blackout* which, along with albums such as *Lovedrive, Animal Magnetism* and *Love At First Sting*, proved to be a healthy antidote to the shambolic village hall buffoonery going under the guise of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. The Scorpions' professionalism, wide-eyed enthusiasm and endearingly basic grasp of the English language made them a joy to behold.

But as the decades passed they became a distant memory, consigned to the bargain bin of musical history. Until last year, that is, when they made a spectacular comeback at a Royal Albert Hall memorial for rock DJ Tommy Vance, with a tight, polished show that made headliners Judas Priest look positively Jurassic. As my jaw hit the floor, the band proceeded to assault an initially wary audience of classic rock dilettantes with a tight, well-thought-out set of their musical highlights.

"I am glad that you mentioned the Albert Hall," Klaus says. "When you have a long career and you are a powerful and energetic band, if you can't deliver on the same level again, it's very hard to continue. We feel that we can deliver as a live band, and we also want to deliver as recording artists."

The Scorpions' long, diverse history has taken them from being underground German metal merchants to the internationally established artists they are today.

Classic Rock caught up with the band in Paris recently, where they were playing one of a series of shows featuring original guitarist Uli Roth, a move inspired by the success of the reunion at Wacken. On the British dates in July Rudolf's errant sibling, Michael, will also join them.

➳

Today's band is the same line-up that made the victorious return at the Albert Hall, featuring the long-standing triumvirate of Rudolf, Klaus and guitarist Matthias Jabs, plus relative newcomers, Pawel 'Baby' Maciwoda (bass) and James Kottak (drums). I spoke to the original members over a couple of days to get an overview of their career, the highs and lows, and also talk about the new album, tour and their attempt to re-establish themselves. The first thing that becomes apparent is that Matthias is not too happy about featuring ex-guitarists on the current tour. "Here we are in Paris, on the day the new album is coming out, and we're playing a show featuring members from the past playing old songs," he grumbles. "Fans do not come for a history lesson. Don't get me wrong, Wacken was a great idea and very enjoyable experience, but we've invested a lot in making *Humanity – Hour 1* and it's important that we push it."

You need Hans: Buchholz, Rarebell, Schenker (R), Meine and Jabs.

So why do it? "Because certain people are reacting to requests on the internet. When 50 people mail you asking for old members to come back, it seems like a lot. In reality it isn't, it's just a bunch of die-hard fans scattered across the globe."

Meine is not of same opinion. "For the fans it's very important that we go back in our history and even play songs from the 70s, which sometimes even we feel is a long time back," he explains. "And having Matthias in the band as lead guitar player, of course he's not very much interested in playing songs by Uli. That was way before his time and you've got to respect that. But the fans appreciate that the Scorpions are still rocking like crazy. I think it gives us a lot of street credibility."

Adding to the intrigue, later in the evening Uli Roth reveals that he was actually asked to play on the new album but couldn't fit it into his schedule. Aside from this minor quibble, the band appear to be a solid, functioning unit, and they still look and sound incredibly healthy and optimistic. While Meine and Jabs disguise their follicle erosion with designer headgear, Schenker has replaced his uniform centre-parted bob with tufts of bleached hair gelled in a style that makes him look like a Bavarian elder counterpart to David Beckham.

To cover the Scorpions' whole history in the confines of one article is an impossible task as it spans over 40 years, countless albums and line-up changes, along with every rock'n'roll soap opera scenario imaginable. But there are pivotal points and events that stand out. Firstly it's important to understand the musical landscape of the band's home town of Hanover in the early 70s. While the UK music press focused on the experimental electronica of groups like Tangerine Dream and Can, there was also a burgeoning hard rock scene in Germany.

"Hanover was well known all over Germany as a heavy metal town," reveals Meine. "I was in a band called Copernicus with Michael Schenker. We used to do covers of songs by bands like Taste and Led Zeppelin. We would compete with the Scorpions, as we played the same venues. It was all about who had the biggest PA and got the best reaction. At that time Rudolf used to sing in the Scorpions, with his back to the audience."

Matthias, who is almost 10 years younger than his sparring partners, remembers both bands during his early tenures with German groups Lady and Fargo.

"We used to pass each other on the *autobhan*. In those days we all had our band names plastered on the side of the van to stop them getting stolen."

Eventually Rudolf convinced both Michael and Klaus to join the band and record *Lonesome Crow*. This was a false start as they promptly lost the prodigious Michael to the clutches of UFO. They immediately went to Uli, who had turned them down before.

"I knew the Scorpions back in 1970 when they were virtually a rhythm'n'blues band," recalls Uli, an amiable chap whose gentle manner matches his 60s retro hippy finery. "When they first asked me to join, I declined. I had a band called Dawn Road which was an amateur thing, we were doing Emerson, Lake & Palmer stuff and still at high school. I was doing mainly classical music and that wasn't my direction."

After much cajoling from Rudy (Schenker's persuasive skills are a theme prevalent throughout the band's history) Uli agreed to fill in on one live performance. Shortly after the group disbanded.

> **"Growing up in postwar Germany, to be a German was nothing to be proud of."**
>
> **– Klaus Meine**

During this hiatus Rudy spent a lot of time with Dawn Road. "I guess he liked what he heard or saw and we started to play together," remembers Uli. "And then we got Klaus back in again. Even though there were more members of Dawn Road than the Scorpions, we decided to change the band's name to the Scorpions because they already had a record deal." The band also included bassist Francis Buccholz who would become an integral member but eventually split in acrimonious circumstances.

The Scorpions recorded *Fly To The Rainbow* in 1974 and proceeded to tour extensively, although even then it was obvious that Schenker and Meine were on a different path to Roth. "Rudolf and Klaus are a great songwriting team, one of the best ever," Uli says. "I wrote the other half of the stuff, which was a bit more rock'n'roll. It was a strange mix but it worked."

In Trance followed and then the band released the notorious *Virgin Killer*, featuring a suspiciously young, pre-pubescent girl posing in a provocative manner on the cover. The record was the first in a series of controversial Scorpions album sleeves that would gain the band notoriety and publicity all over the world. Although they point out that the picture on *Virgin Killer* was not their idea and it's something they would baulk at doing today, it didn't do their profile any damage. "With *Virgin Killer*, the record company guy said: 'I want to do this and I don't care if they put me in prison for it!'" Meine recalls. "I remember we walked home with the completed artwork and I was thinking this is definitely an album you don't want to show back home." But he adds: "I admit later on we used covers like weapons of provocation. People would talk about them and we loved doing them, especially with Storm from Hipgnosis.We followed his work from Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin –they were our heroes."

Two significant things happened between the recording of *In Trance* and *Virgin Killer*. Producer Dieter Dierks came on board and over the years became responsible for moulding the band's sound to such an extent that he was regarded as the sixth Scorpion (in fact, it turns out that Dierks was second choice to Chas Chandler). It was also becoming apparent to Uli Roth that he no longer wanted to play in a hard-touring rock outfit even though the Scorpions were by now making waves all over Europe and Japan. "Each album got bigger and bigger and the *Tokyo Tapes* live album was an international breakthrough, but I had really mentally left the band some time before that," says Roth. "I wanted to go a more experimental route. I wanted to be a little freer in music, rather than just watch album sales. It was a foregone conclusion that I needed to split but it took a year. I told them to look for a guitarist but they never did."

Both Michael and Uli, although extremely talented players, seemed too self-indulgent to be a part of the vision that Rudolf and Klaus had for the band.

"They had very big egos, that's for sure," Klaus agrees. "They both had their own vision of what they wanted to do and they were definitely not team players. Now the focus was much more on the songwriting of Rudolf and myself. The band was becoming more focused on the artistic direction."

Geographically, the direction they were headed in was the States. But before that, they needed to establish a solid line-up. With Uli about to depart, they had another setback when drummer Rudy Lenners left due to ill health. However, this turned out to be a blessing in disguise. In a strange turn of events they went to Britain to look for a replacement, only to find a German, Herman Rarebell, who was a regular customer at a legendary London watering hole known as the Speakeasy.

Rarebell had left Germany for Britain when he turned 21 in order to expand his CV and get some studio work. While in the UK he bumped into Michael Schenker, who suggested he go and check out his brother Rudolf's band. This led to a successful audition, and Rarebell was soon heading back to Germany. Herman was a charismatic and energetic character, and immediately got involved in the songwriting process, penning the lyrics to *He's A Woman, She's A Man* (based on a true-life experience in the Parisian red light district) on his first Scorpions album *Taken By Force*.

MAIN PIC: ROSS HALFIN; INSET: REDFERNS

SCORPIONS
WIND OF CHANGE

Whistle while you work

Je t'aime les Scorpions.

We already know that the Scorpions are responsible for countless crimes committed against music (the nauseating power ballad) and fashion (tight lycra and headbands), not forgetting all the fans who have suffered from serious third-degree burns while holding their Bics aloft during interminable renditions of *Vind Ov Change*, ja?

But who could have guessed that, next to the defective condom, these chaps were to blame for a population explosion using the power of song?

Rudy Schenker: "Our song *Still Loving You* created a baby boom in France."

Come again? (S'cuse the pun.)

"Ja," replies Rudy, "we recently played an event celebrating 50 years of the EU in Brussels in front of 80,000 people, and the woman who introduced us said: 'And now the Scorpions – who, in 1985, created a baby boom in France!' It's not a joke. In 1985 many people made love to that song in France and parents named their children Sly."

S.L.Y. – *Still Loving You*, geddit?

Well, at least it wasn't *He's A Woman, She's A Man*, or there would have been some very confused and angry baby boomers.

Rudy Schenker's dental work remains a source of endless fascination for Klaus Meine.

Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan gets to grips with the guitar riff to *Another Piece Of Meat*.

Pump' up the volume

"Ja! Ve haf some very crazy freunde..."

You may be surprised to learn that the leader of the recently re-formed Smashing Pumpkins, Billy Corgan, makes a guest appearance on the Scorpions' new album *Humanity – Hour 1*, doing a duet with Klaus Meine on a track called *The Cross*. It turns out that Corgan is a huge Scorps fan – and that this is not the first time the band have approached him.

SCORPIONS
HUMANITY
HOUR I

As Rudy Schenker revealed: "I wanted Billy to sing on our 2000 album *Moment Of Glory*, but couldn't get hold of him. He is a big fan and has performed *Rock You Like A Hurricane* live. He has bootlegs and out-takes from the *Tokyo Tapes*. When we went out to dinner all he did was talk about the Scorpions!"

There are other closet fans of the Teutonic Titans. Rudy: "Green Day, System Of A Down and Nickelback all they say they've been influenced by us. When we come to town the kids think: 'Wow, that's the band that influenced Smashing Pumpkins' – and they go to our gig. Now we have many young fans."

As the years passed Herman would become the one who wrote some of the Scorpions' most popular songs. He explains: "The reason for this was that my English was the best and Dieter liked my words. I wrote about what happened to us while we were out on the road. And I think people can associate with that."

Klaus admits that it took him a while to feel comfortable singing in English, even though he had done so throughout his career. "It was very difficult at first but German lyrics just didn't fit in with the music and we wanted to go all over the world. Growing up in postwar Germany, to be a German was nothing to be proud of [laughs]. We wanted to be respected in an international community of musicians."

Taken By Force was Uli's swansong and the band set out on the arduous task of auditioning over 150 guitarists. They finally settled on a former member of The Pretty Things, Peter Tolson. Unfortunately things didn't gel and they again found themselves axeless. Once more they found the solution closer to home, in the form of Matthias Jabs.

"Rudy rang me up to say that he was recording a solo album and would I like to play on it," Jabs recalls with amusement. "That was typical Rudy, finding a way to hook you in." But when Jabs joined the Scorpions, the unexpected happened. Michael Schenker had left UFO after an altercation with lead singer Phil Mogg and had also developed severe drug and alcohol problems in the process. An American management team expressed interest in working with the Scorpions, but strongly suggested it would be a good idea to take Michael on board, regardless of his state of mind. Desperate to break in the States, Rudy agreed and promptly let go of Matthias.

"What you have to remember," Jabs explains, "is that the Scorpions weren't a big band at all at the time, so it was really was no big deal."

Michael's problems manifested themselves early on in the Scorpions' US tour – he collapsed on stage during the third show. As the tour progressed the band had to plead with Matthias to help them out. "Rudy kept calling me to help out on the shows, and every time I said: 'Okay, but just this one time.' And he agreed… typical Rudy."

Finally an incoherent Michael departed and Jabs joined full-time, completing the classic Scorpions line-up. Michael did manage to stay long enough to contribute to a couple of tracks on the next album, *Lovedrive*, which marked the beginning of the band's full-on assault of the US.

"I remember the first show we did in Cleveland," says Rudy. "We were the opener and we were rocking like a hurricane already [laughs]. We were only allowed 30 minutes but we played 40. The management and the other bands were looking at each other saying: 'What are these crazy Germans

LIVE: GETTY X2; INSET ROSS HALFIN

The Scorpions: open up and say ya.

doing?' I remember Ted Nugent coming down to the dressing room and saying: 'Guys, you have to calm down!' We finished the show before they managed to unplug us, and this was the beginning of the American success.'

With a more polished, tighter sound, the Scorpions' formula of mixing heavy rock and power ballads was already in place. *Lovedrive* (with another controversial cover photographed in the back of Elton John's Rolls-Royce) entered the Top 50 in the *Billboard* chart and soon after the band went back into the studio to record *Animal Magnetism*. It wasn't as successful as its predecesser but the band continued to build a strong following on the road. However, Klaus began to experience problems with his throat. This became more noticeable when the band started work on their next album, *Blackout*.

"When we started working on arrangements Klaus's voice sounded very unhealthy," says Rudy, "then after about three or four weeks he couldn't sing any more. When we got back to Germany he went to the doctor. The doctor looked at his vocal cords and said: 'What is your job?' When he said singer, the doctor said: 'Klaus, you have to get another job!'"

Klaus recalls: "It would have been easy for the band to walk out and look for a new singer, but they didn't. Rudolf kept pushing me and challenging me. He said: 'Whatever it takes, we will wait for you.'"

With Don Dokken helping out on guide tracks, Klaus returned after a couple of operations to sing his *herz* (German for 'heart') out on easily the best Scorpions album ever.

Producing three hit singles, *Blackout* was the band's most successful album to date, although Meine was wary of the inevitable tour.

"I had no idea if I would survive going on the road. My voice was untested. But after a year we came back loaded with platinum albums. This was the next level and in a way I was starting again."

Two years later, in 1984, came *Love At First Sting* and its smash *Rock You Like A Hurricane*, which was propelled to mega-hit status by MTV.

A succession of successful albums and tours followed and as the 80s drew to a close the group found themselves coming to the end of their relationship with Dierks – much to their relief. As Klaus explains; "We were not happy with Dieter. We were enjoying a lot of success and it was not our choice to keep going back to Cologne and record. Our desire was to go to places like the Record Plant in Los Angeles, but we couldn't because we were tied up in contracts. *Savage Amusement* was our last album with Dieter and it was a difficult time for us. We had come to the end of our contract but there were still issues. What you have to remember is that when we signed up with him we were young kids. Looking back on it we just tired off each other and we had to split."

Rudy: "The chemistry had gone because Dieter wanted to do an album like Mutt Lange, because of the success of Def Leppard. He wanted samples, programming… all that stuff. If you listen to *Savage Amusement*, it's very sterile."

Teutonic trio: Rudy, Matthias and Klaus.

> **"Ted Nugent came into our dressing room and said: 'Guys, you have to calm down!'"**
>
> **– Rudolf Schenker**

Without Dierks at the controls the band looked to an American producer for inspiration. Keith Olsen twiddled the knobs for *Crazy World*, which spawned one of the Scorpions' greatest hits… their *Stairway To Heaven*… their *Freebird*… their albatross? It was *Wind Of Change*, of course. Inspired by the Scorpions' performance at the 1989 Moscow Peace Festival, it came at a most fortuitous moment.

"It was the end of the 80s when we did *Crazy World*," Klaus reflects. "We were on the edge facing a huge musical revolution with grunge and alternative music in the early 90s. Almost every act that came from where we did in the 80s got killed. If this album had been a flop, it could have easily been the end of us too. The success of *Wind Of Change* helped us survive… and it was on the first album we did without Dieter."

Were they aware that the song – and Klaus's whistling – alienated some of the Scorpions' fans?

Rudy: "*Wind Of Change* was a big success because mothers liked it, grandmothers liked it and kids liked it. But a lot of rock fans said: 'No, this is not my band any more.' But it helped us survive to make another album. I am a rocker but our ballads work because we have an outstanding singer and he can sing them well. It's just become a part of us. I like Deep Purple because of *Child In Time*. Always when a rock band writes a ballad it's something special. The problem is if the ballad on the album becomes *too* big… then there's something wrong."

Rudy and co continued to play festivals all over the world including Donington, Rock In Rio and a historic guest appearance in Roger Waters's performance of *The Wall* in Berlin.

Unfortunately the euphoric glow was shattered when the Scorpions found themselves in financial dispute with their business manager. This led to the departure of bassist Francis Buchholz, leaving them angry and dismayed.

"People often think our divorce from Dieter was ugly, but it wasn't really," says Klaus. "However, with Francis, it was a *very* ugly divorce. To cut a long story very short, when we made a decision to change our whole business structure and fire our business manager, unfortunately Francis went with him. We lost a friend and great musician."

The wounds are still deep – as was revealed at Wacken, where Buchholz was the only Scorpions member noticeable by his absence. (Ironically Buchholz is now bassist with the Uli Roth Band, who will be supporting The Scorpions on their British dates this summer.) [*2007 - Ed.*]

As the band ploughed their more commercial furrow, they had another loss when Herman Rarebell decided to leave in 1996, explaining that he was "sick of playing *Wind Of Change* for the millionth time and living on the road".

Some die-hard fans will have you believe that with the departure of Rarebell, a larger-than-life figure, the Scorpions' career took a downward trajectory, especially as the drummer wasn't there to help out with the lyrics. In some ways this is true. Although they continued to deliver great live shows, on record they made some serious errors including 1999's *Eye II Eye*, a misjudged stab at techno.

Today the Scorpions have come the full circle. They are again determined to crack the international market, and at its best their new album *Humanity – Hour 1* recalls *Blackout*'s glory days.

"You never know – this album may be our last one, who knows?" Klaus says. "You can't take it for granted there will be another one. So when we do a record we want it to be great. We want to end on a high, to keep going and find a moment to have a nice way out of this madness. The best thing is that we have a good chemistry. And our friendship is still intact.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

Motörhead

Motorhead

Speeding off his tits in a Hollywood hotel room during Hawkwind's 1974 US tour, bassist Lemmy Kilmister writes the song that will change his life forever.

Words: **Paul Elliott**

It gave a name to one of the greatest and loudest bands on earth, defined the man who wrote it as the epitome of the sex and drugs and rock'n'roll lifestyle, and had a profound influence on Metallica, Venom and Napalm Death. But when Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister wrote *Motorhead* almost 40 years ago it was, he says, "just another song". Nobody, least of all Lemmy himself, could have foreseen that it would become arguably the most important song he would ever write.

In 1974, Lemmy was 28 years old and the bassist in space-rock gurus Hawkwind. He'd been in the band three years, and had sung lead vocal on their biggest hit, *Silver Machine*, which had reached No.3 on the UK chart in June 1972. But as a songwriter he was feeling frustrated. "There was never much interest in my songs in Hawkwind," Lemmy recalls wearily.

Nevertheless, he stuck at it. And when Hawkwind reached Los Angeles on a 1974 US tour, he found the inspiration for a new song during an all-night booze and drugs bender. The band were staying at the Continental Hyatt House hotel – nicknamed the Riot House, after the wild parties staged there by visiting rock stars – on Sunset Boulevard, It was the perfect setting for Lemmy to fully immerse himself in the rock'n'roll lifestyle – and to write a song about it.

On the balcony that opened out from his room on the seventh floor, Lemmy wrote the song in a marathon overnight session fuelled by whisky and speed, using an Ovation acoustic guitar that he'd borrowed from Roy Wood, whose band Wizzard were also at the Hyatt.

"I don't remember the exact chronology of the night," he says, understandably given the circumstances, "but I was still up at seven in the morning, howling away at the top of my voice." He also remembers seeing cars pulling up on the street below, as early morning commuters looked up open-mouthed at the screaming, long-haired lunatic apparently about to jump to his death. And yet there were no complaints from fellow hotel guests. "Mind you," he says, "it was a lot wilder in them days at the Hyatt."

What Lemmy bashed out that night was, in his words, "a basic rock'n'roll number". And its lyrics were effectively a running commentary on the night's events. The opening couplet placed Lemmy as a mad Englishman abroad: '*Sunrise, wrong side of another day/Sky high, six thousand miles away.*' The refrain '*Remember me now…*' was a reference to his many one-night stands. And the song's title was adapted from American slang. "A motorhead," he explains, "is someone who talks all the time. I heard the expression and I thought it was rather apt." Lemmy is also "very proud" of the fact that *Motorhead* is the first, and very likely the only, rock song ever to include the word 'parallelogram'.

Lemmy was surprised when Dave Brock consented to Hawkwind recording the song. They cut the track at Olympic Studios in Barnes, south London in January 1975, with Lemmy singing lead. And although that first recorded version of the song was a little sluggish for Lemmy's taste, he did like the jazz-inspired violin solo by Hawkwind's keyboard player, Simon House. *Motorhead* was chosen as the B-side on Hawkwind single *Kings Of Speed*. "How ironic," Lemmy notes.

"I wrote it at seven in the morning, howling away at the top of my voice... Loud, fast, raucous, speed-freak rock'n'roll."

In May 1975, Lemmy was busted for possession of cocaine on the Canadian/US border, resulting in the cancellation of several Hawkwind gigs. And although he was released after the drugs found on him were identified as amphetamines – a lesser offence, for which the charges were dropped – he returned to London jobless.

Lemmy might have been down, but he wasn't finished. And with a song that Hawkwind dismissed as no more than a B-side, he had the template for a new band. Having teamed up with guitarist Larry Wallis and drummer Lucas Fox, Lemmy originally named his new band Bastard. But, as he recalls: "A friend told him: 'You probably won't get a lot of *Top Of The Pops* action with a name like that.' So I went with Motörhead."

The name was perfectly suited to the band's music: "Loud, fast, city, raucous, arrogant, paranoid, speed-freak rock'n'roll," as Lemmy himself describes it. But it took a little time to really nail that sound – as illustrated by the band's first recording of their signature song in 1976. To Lemmy's mind, this version was "too slow". It was only after Fox was sacked and Wallis quit that the definitive full-throttle version of the song was recorded in 1977 by the classic Motörhead line-up of Lemmy, guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and drummer Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor. This version was recorded with the whole band – and their producer, the aptly named 'Speedy' Keen – all buzzing on amphetamines. "We were out of our heads," Lemmy recalls. "Speedy did 19 fucking mixes of *Motorhead* and said: 'Which one do you like the best?' I just pointed at one and said: 'That one.'"

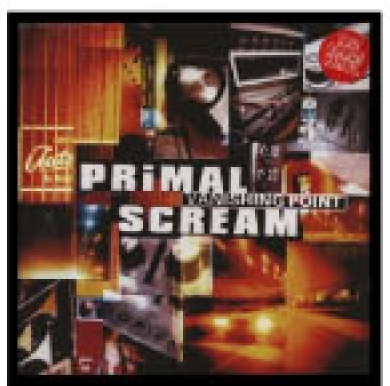
This fast and loose rock'n'roll anthem resonated with punks and headbangers alike, and was a touchstone for many who followed in its wake.

"That song had a primal power," says Napalm Death singer Barney Greenway. "It was fast, like it was about to come off the rails. It had a real 'fuck it' mentality. And it became a huge influence on punk bands like Discharge and metal bands like Venom and Metallica."

"It's just a song I wrote for Hawkwind, which was updated for Motörhead," Lemmy says matter-of-factly. But for all his nonchalance, the bigger truth about *Motorhead* is that it changed his life. ❶

Motörhead's latest covers collection, Under Cover, is out now on Motörhead music.

GETTY



RIGHTEOUS STUFF

Motorhead has been recorded not only by Hawkwind and, of course, Motörhead themselves, but also by an array of others, including thrash metal jokers Lawnmower Deth, US hardcore punks Poison Idea and 90s 'acid jazz' also-rans Corduroy. Primal Scream also reworked it for their 1997 album *Vanishing Point*.

"I got a platinum disc after Primal Scream did it," Lemmy says. "They're a more popular band. Well, they were, briefly." But he wasn't impressed by The Scream's efforts. "I could take it or leave it," he sniffs. He much prefers the version on Cockney Rejects' *Greatest Hits Vol.3: Live & Loud*. "That was good, I thought."

As for the worst recording of the song: "The worst one was Corduroy - a disco version. Appalling."

All good, clean fun: (l-r) 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, Phil Taylor and, Lemmy.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
June 1977
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.6 (live version, July 1981)
PERSONNEL
Lemmy Kilmister
Bass, vocals
'Fast' Eddie Clarke
Guitar
Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Lemmy Kilmister
PRODUCER
Speedy Keen
LABEL
Chiswick

"We're a rock'n'roll band and we're gonna be big."

In the early 70s there wasn't really any such thing as heavy metal – but there *were* bands like **The Godz** who were willing to take things to the limit, even if it cost them their lives...

WORDS: **SLEAZEGRINDER**

I have a weathered copy of *Rock Scene* magazine here from 1979. Amid the fawning odes to Patti Smith and Bowie, there's a short, brutal article about a scruffy band of motorcycle outlaws from Ohio humbly named The Godz. Just two years into their major label career, and they were already at death's door, quite literally. Two members were already dead, their albums were mercilessly slagged by the press and virtually ignored by the buying public, their relentless touring schedule was wearing them down to brittle bones and shredded nerves, their fan base consisted entirely of homicidal bikers and mental patients, and their bass player and erstwhile leader, Eric Moore, had spent more time in jail and in hospitals than he had on the road. None of these facts fazed him in the least, however.

"We're a rock'n'roll band," he said in the *Rock Scene* interview. "No prefix. Not punk, not disco. We are a straight ahead rock band, and we're gonna be *big*!"

I wasn't there, but I am assuming Eric took a deep swallow of something potent at that point.

"I look out and there's thousands of people, so intense, and so screwed-up," he continued. "I mean, the first two rows look like Attila the Hun's frontline troops, and they're foaming at the mouth. They're falling over the railing trying to get to us, and the security people are picking them up and throwing them back on the other side. It's like *Night Of The Living Dead*."

Those thousands soon dwindled to hundreds, and by the dawn of the 80s, The Godz retreated to the Midwest, content to drink and brawl with their own kind. But just a few years before, for one brief moment, they were the brightest stars on rock's horizon. In the late 70s, at the height of disco's ascension and at the dawn of punk's infiltration, the unlikely band of long-haired fist-fighters signed a lucrative deal with Casablanca Records, who sent them out on do-or-die arena tours with Kiss and satin-worshippers Angel. The Godz were the antithesis of both those bands, a no-nonsense crew of beer-swilling uber-dudes who plied ear-shattering thunder-boogie, and who treated the road like an endless war campaign. They had the looks, the hooks, the songs and the sound, and unlike their uneasy travelling companions, they had no need for gimmicks or parlour tricks. They were, quite simply, rock'n'roll motherfuckers of the highest order.

So what went wrong? Whose bones got broken, and who burnt the contracts? There have been more than 30 members of The Godz over the last four decades. Some are now dead, some wish they were, and some don't even remember what happened. But there's one man who's been there since the beginning. The biggest badass of 'em all: Eric Moore. Eric is still the leader of The Godz. He sings and plays lead guitar now, and employs the cream of the Columbus, Ohio rock scene to keep his infernal machine rolling. And he's still living the same kill-for-thrills lifestyle he was in 1976.

In 1973 Moore was a member of the Capitol City Rockets Rollerderby (esssentially, people on roller skates beating the shit out of each other) team. Eventually, several of the Rockets formed a band with the same title. Fittingly, they played their first gig at the roller rink. Moore had to decide what occupation suited him best. Fate decided for him.

"I had a bad motorcycle landing, and a bad parachute landing. My knees and ankles are gone," he says, with a rueful chuckle. Now a full-time rocker, Moore continued playing the local circuit. Some reps from Elektra Records saw him playing with the Rockets, and signed them to a contract ten minutes after the gig began.

GETTY X2

Bassist Eric Moore.

"It had a lot to do with the way the singer and I interacted," Moore says, and then adds: "He just died recently." He pauses. "It was from somethin' natural," he says. "Wasn't drugs or alcohol."

As if that's what we'd naturally expect from a friend of Moore's. The Capitol City Rockets released one self-titled album, but broke up soon after. Moore formed The Godz in 1975 with vocalist Mark Chatfield, drummer Glen Cataline and a crew of local rowdies, including a second drummer, Hayward Law, and keyboard player Michael Adams. After writing a fistful of screeching biker-metal anthems, the band hit the road. And that's when the trouble started.

"Our keyboard player and drummer were killed within the first six months," Moore says. Law and Adams died in a car crash, on the way to pick up some promo materials for the band in Parkersburg, Ohio. Many bands would take such a major tragedy as a bad omen and call it a day. Not The Godz.

"No, we didn't think about breaking up," Moore tells me. "We were hard-pressed about what to do next. We were dumbfounded for about two weeks. Nobody wanted to break up. And then Bob Hill, who I had been in the Capitol City Rockets with, he called me up to see if there was anything he could do to help. I said 'Yeah, you can join my band right now'. And he did."

I ask Moore how a band can possibly shoulder two deaths in one year. Turns out, they were already battle-hardened: "We had a roadie killed about a month before that. He was driving way too fast late at night on open highway. The car came apart on him at 130mph. It actually threw him out the window, then ran over him."

After quickly building up a rabid following throughout the Midwest, the band signed with Casablanca Records in 1977. Their first order of business was settling the dispute over their name. Unbeknown to the Ohioans, an acid-rock band from New York City had been writing and recording under the name since the mid 1960s. Moore recounts how he settled the score.

"One of the guys in that band came to the record company, and I was in the office," he remembers. "The secretary came back and said, 'There's a guy here who says he's in a band called The Godz, and he wants you to pay him money for the use of the name.' Well, I had never heard the name before. They had made one or two albums, and they were all fraternity brothers. They did songs like the *Black Sheep* song, you know, *'We're poor little lambs that lost our way…'* That's the kind of material they were doing. So, you know, I didn't have any use for buying a record like that. I didn't know they existed. And I just suggested that he and I go down to the parking lot and whoever came out was The Godz. Well, he just grabbed his briefcase and left. I never heard another word."

And that's how you solve problems the Eric Moore way.

"Listen," Moore says, "if you want to call yourself The Godz you better be willing to prove it."

Their name firmly established, The Godz were sent out on the road throughout 1976 and 1977. I asked Moore if Casablanca, a label known for signing flamboyant bands, had any image suggestions for the band.

"Not one," Moore says. "They had Angel in white satin, they had Kiss dressed like clowns, and they had us in black leather. We used to travel a lot with Angel. Talk about two different bands."

One thing is perfectly clear, Eric Moore did not like touring with Angel.

"Angel were scumbags," he says, in no uncertain terms. "They stuffed their pants with socks. They did the whole Spinal Tap thing."

I press Moore for details. He is happy to offer them. "We called Punky Meadows Monkey Petal. He was the sock stuffer. If he had to do an interview or something, it took him 40 minutes to get ready for it. It was just absurd.

Eric Moore and Eddie Salem from a 1985 incarnation of The Godz.

GETTY X2

"Gregg Guiffria we called Breck Boy. The back of his amplifier he had a swing-down mirror and a can of hairspray. So if someone was doing a drum solo or something, he'd dive behind his amplifier and do his hair. So, one day we stripped the label off the can of hairspray and put it on a can of spray adhesive. He came back there and sprayed his whole head with it real good, and all of a sudden his hands were glued to his hair. We thought that was funny. He didn't."

Despite their antagonism, there was at least one incident when The Godz protected Angel from potential greivious bodily harm.

"Yeah, in San Diego. The house security decided that Angel were fags, and they didn't like them. They were new security, and they were the second string for the college football team there. They were all just looking for trouble the whole time. We helped Angel get back to their dressing room in one piece. I said into the microphone: 'If there's any outlaw bikers in here tonight, we'd like them to come up here and be our security, because we don't trust these fucks.' And about 200 bikers came up to the front. I looked at these college assholes and said: 'There's not gonna be any security problems, so why don't you go get a cup of coffee or something?' So they just left."

"What's wrong with being sexy?"

Between tours playing with Judas Priest, Cheap Trick and Kiss, The Godz recorded their first album in the summer of 1977. It was released the next year, to miserable reviews. *Rolling Stone* wrote that it "epitomised the most wretched excesses of 70s rock." The reviews didn't matter. The band sold out 6,000 seat arenas on a nightly basis, and stayed on the road for a harrowing 17 months. As the crowds grew bigger, so did the potential for violence. More than once, Moore found himself on the wrong side of the law after a late-night scuffle. Sometimes, the night would end in a hail of lead.

"Sure, I went to jail a couple times," he says. "But here's the thing. Whether it's a crowd of 1,000 or 30,000 people, when you're the guy who's getting all the attention, it comes in the form of some guy who doesn't like that. It'll be the guy in the fifteenth row – this actually happened one night. Guy was in the fifteenth row with his girlfriend. His girlfriend cops a nut while I'm up there doing my thing, right?"

> "SOMEONE CAME AT ME WITH A GUN. I REACTED. I'D RATHER BE JUDGED BY 12 PEOPLE THAN CARRIED BY SIX." – ERIC MOORE

"So now it's four in the morning, we're loading up our equipment. There's a bunch of people back in the alley, and all they wanna do is get autographs and shake our hands and stuff. One guy comes out of the dark with his hand out towards me, and there was a gun in it. I reacted. I'd rather be judged by 12 people than carried by six, you know?

"And the way the law is now, you can't even reasonably defend yourself. I walk into a courtroom looking like me, and somebody got shot over some horseshit. Even though you're innocent, somebody wants you to do some time. So that's what happens."

The Godz released their second LP, the frantic *Nothing Sacred*, in the spring of 1979. On July 5, 1979 Eric Moore got into a near-fatal motorcycle accident, effectively putting him out of commission for nearly a year. As Moore states, he's still feeling the effects.

"I still have problems with my leg a couple times a week," he says.

"I only broke one bone, but my insides got shook up real bad. I had a lot of internal displacement of organs. When my helmet hit the speedometer, it said 77mph, when I came to a complete dead stop. It was a brand new motorcycle, the first time I didn't have a Harley. It was not my kind of motorcycle, and I had three Quaaludes and some Jack Daniel's in me, and I decided I wanted to go fast."

While Moore tended to his injuries, his band fell apart. "Everybody who was once in power jumped in to try and fill the vacuum. I came back to a miserable mess. We had gigs booked states apart on the same day, just everything was awful."

Things began unravelling quickly. Casablanca dropped the band, and stiffed them for the remainder of their contract.

"They had the nerve to send me a piece of paper that said they owe me $181, 000 dollars but they're not going giving it to me," Moore says. "I knew I would never see that money. And I haven't."

To make matters worse, after a nerve-jangling episode with a mad bus driver, Moore's long-time partner in grime Bob Hill, quit the band in 1980.

"Well, see, the bus driver was going the wrong way down the highway," Moore laughs. "We were in country where you can't pull off to the side of the road, and there was a big divider between the highway, so we had to go until there was one of those cut-thrus that the highway patrol uses. We were flashing every light in the bus that would flash.

"When we got to the driver, he was steering with his knees," Moore says. "His headphones were on so loud playing Pink Floyd that we could hear it in the back of the bus, and he was rolling a joint. Luckily we somehow made it through. But after it was over, Bob said, 'Hey man, I'm a millionaire already, I don't need to do this'."

Moore was crushed. "I understood his viewpoint, and it killed me. We were just breaking big at the time, and we came from absolutely nothing, no money, no family, nothing. Quitting was all just beyond imagination for me."

Thoroughly defeated, Moore returned to Ohio and formed the Eric Moore Band. He has been active ever since, both as a solo artist and, when the mood hits, as a God. "I don't make a lot of money," Moore says. "I could make a lot more as a drug dealer. But this is the path I chose, and it's the right path."

Isn't it frustrating to know how close The Godz were to rock stardom?

"Hey, I don't care if someday they gotta sit me on a seat with a little table next to me with an ashtray and some cigarettes and a bottle of whisky and a bucket on the other side for me to spit blood in," he says. "I'll just sit down and do the blues. I mean, I don't want that to happen, but if it does, well, that's still a good life. I left home the week of my fourteenth birthday and I joined the rock'n'roll circus. And I've never been back." ❶

THE BAND THAT MADE METAL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

With behind the scenes interviews, trace the remarkable story of how Metallica changed the world, from their beginnings as San Francisco thrashers to their current status as the world's biggest metal band.

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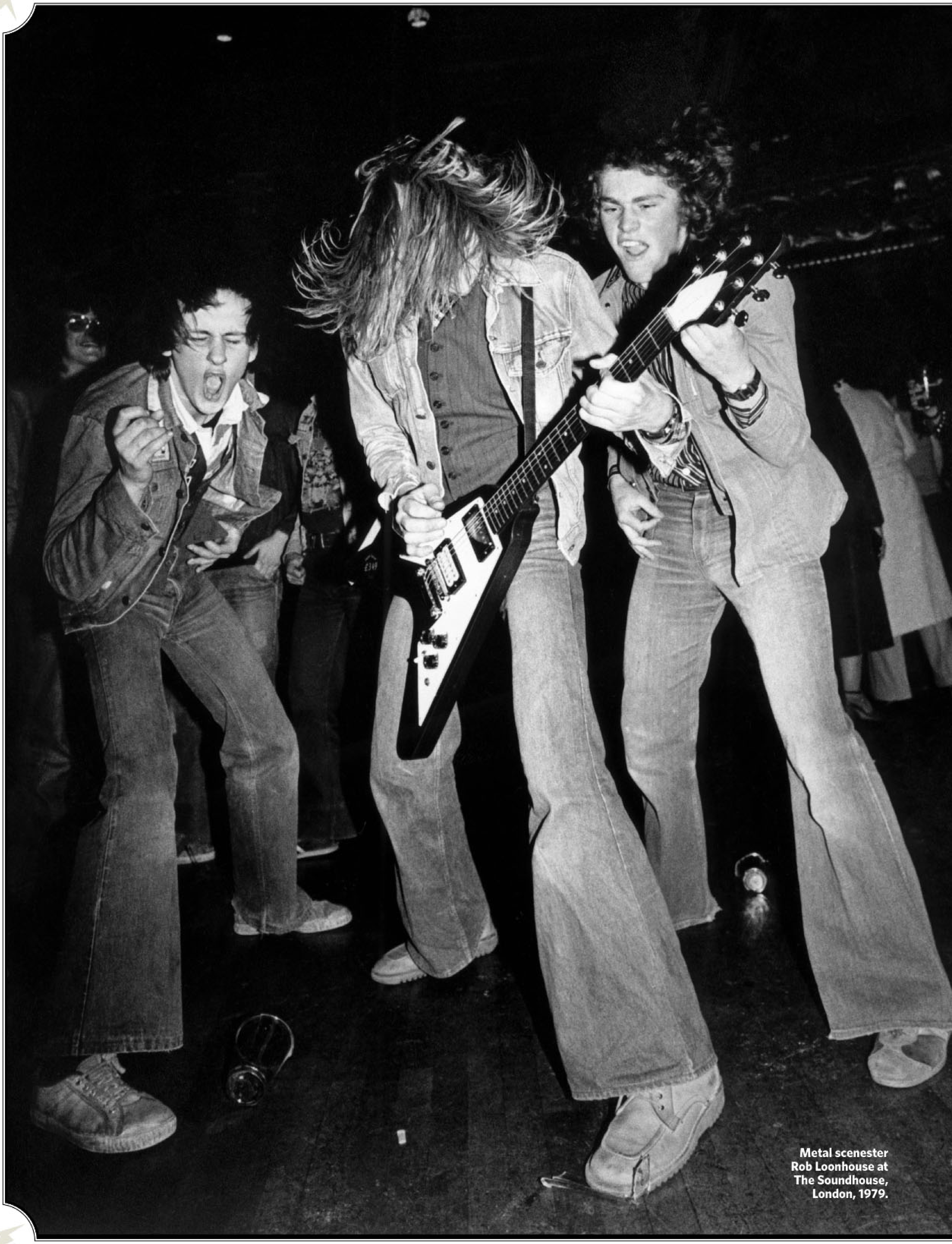


Metal scenester Rob Loonhouse at The Soundhouse, London, 1979.

THE EXPLOSION

The new wave – redefined and uncontainable.

WORDS: PHILIP WILDING

I remember the cover more than anything else. The darkened alleyway lit only by a solitary streetlight, in the background, a hideous Eddie clutching a broken bottle (though I wouldn't even know the ghoulish figure had a name until some months later) and a young man – long hair, drainpipe jeans, waistcoat: *me*, ostensibly! – running for his life. Running straight into the hand (or in this case, grasping claw) of doom. Who, I remember thinking, pitches singles to their fans, by offing them on their artwork? I was hooked, though. That irresistible opening bass line, Paul Dianno's singularly demented howl, I remember being absolutely apocalyptic when he was ousted from the band a few years later. I was convinced they were finished, how could they possibly follow *that*?

As history bears out, Maiden did okay after that explosive start, but my heart still belongs to their first two albums. I was in Paris quite recently for a short break and sung Maiden's *Murders In The Rue Morgue* so many times that my girlfriend gave me a look that suggested my fate on those Parisian streets might echo that of the victims in the said same song if I didn't bloody pipe down. What did she know? NWOBHM, like life, came at you fast.

Much, quite rightly, has been made of Maiden's Soundhouse tapes and the influence of Neal Kay on the burgeoning new wave of British heavy metal, but metal was never the property of scenesters, and I can only comment on it as someone from the Welsh provinces. Picking up the extraordinary *Metal For Muthas* compilation (Iron Maiden, Angel Witch and Samson all on one album!) in my local record shop one Saturday afternoon, and the stories from older boys who had travelled to see Motorhead (along with Maiden, one of the few bands to consistently play in Cardiff until the roof fell in on the Sophia Gardens venue) on their *Bomber* tour and had come away reeling with stories about the set from support band, Saxon.

We got our news from the pages of magazines like *Sounds*, and when they told us Def Leppard had sold out to the Americans, we believed them and shunned the band accordingly (until a friend played me *Hello America* and I was instantly hooked). A few years later, I remember sitting around in a friend's bedroom and hearing *Photograph* for the first time and being mesmerised by its sophistication and production (though those probably weren't my initial thoughts or words at the time).

The first issue of *Kerrang!* sold out in my village, Spiller's record shop in Porth sold Praying Mantis singles and Diamond Head albums to us and we received them like manna from the gods. They sounded spectacular, unearthly – I have a lot of time for both those records still. We were boggle-eyed, awed, and it's no stretch at all for me to understand why someone in Ohio might feel the same way about that glorious shift in rock music, that a young Lars Ulrich might set aside his tennis racquet, hear Diamond Head's *It's Electric* for the first time, think, *'What the fu-?'* and start his own band.

It was a moment in time, my moment in time, I wouldn't have started writing about bands if that dirty deluge hadn't suddenly washed over me. No surprise then that it connected everywhere and for one brief, alluring moment, went shooting off all around the world...

GETTY

The Birth Of The
NWOBHM

In the late 70s, rock music was given a steel-booted kick up the backside by a new breed of band. The **New Wave Of British Heavy Metal** would go on to rule Britannia – and the world.

Words: **Dave Everley** Photos: **Ross Halfin**

IRON MAIDEN

Leppard's Joe Elliott and Maiden's Steve Harris.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main players in the birth of the NWOBHM.

Geoff Barton
Legendary *Sounds* (and current *Classic Rock*) journalist. The first person to use the phrase 'New Wave Of British Heavy Metal' in print.

Biff Byford
Barnsley-born Saxon singer. Has fronted the band since they formed as Son Of A Bitch in the mid-70s.

Fast Eddie Clarke
Former Motörhead guitarist and sole surviving member of the classic line-up. Formed Fastway after his departure in 1982.

Jess Cox
Original singer with Whitley Bay NWOBHM pioneers the Tygers Of Pan Tang. Resurrected groundbreaking label Neat Records in the early 90s.

Andy Dawson
Guitarist with Mansfield band Savage, whose track *Let It Loose* was covered by Metallica on an early demo.

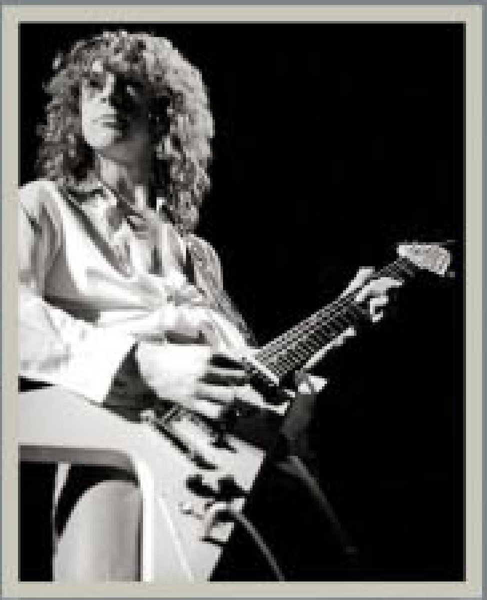
Bruce Dickinson
Leather-lunged former Samson singer (also known as Bruce Bruce). Later replaced Paul Di'Anno in Iron Maiden.

KK Downing
Long-time Judas Priest guitarist. Left the band in 2011 and has since opened a golf course.

Joe Elliott
Singer and founder member of Def Leppard, the first of the NWOBHM bands to make it big in America.

Bruce [Bruce] Dickinson.

Jess Cox.



Brian Tatler.

Ashley Goodall
Former EMI Records A&R man. Signed Iron Maiden and helped put together the groundbreaking *Metal For Muthas* compilation.

Rob Halford
Judas Priest singer, and the man who helped give metal its iconic leather uniform.

Steve Harris
Founder and driving force behind Iron Maiden, the most successful NWOBHM band of them all.

Neal Kay
DJ, tastemaker, compere and founder of legendary north London rock mecca the Heavy Metal Soundhouse.

Rick Savage
Def Leppard bassist and founder member.

Brian Tatler
Guitarist and founder of Diamond Head, whose self-released *Lightning To The Nations* album was one of the NWOBHM's early successes.

Thunderstick
Also known as Barry Graham Purkis, ski-masked former Samson (and, briefly, Iron Maiden) drummer. New album *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is out soon.

Tommy Vance
Late Radio 1 DJ and presenter of Radio 1's *The Friday Rock Show*. AKA The Voice Of Rock.

Tony Wilson
Creator and producer of *The Friday Rock Show*.

Less than a decade after it had been forged in the white heat of the late 60s, British rock was in trouble. Its original pioneers had either split up, lost touch with reality or were spiralling into drug-addled irrelevance, their thunder stolen by both a wave of platinum-plated American bands and the incendiary punk movement.

It may have been down, but British rock wasn't quite out. As the 1970s hurtled towards its conclusion, a new wave of heavy bands from all corners of the United Kingdom sparked off a grass-roots revolution, rewriting the rule book on how things could be done and giving their more established counterparts a shot in the arm. Its leading lights would go on to achieve the unthinkable, but even the bands who didn't and got left behind – the foot soldiers, also-rans and no-hopers – were heroes in their own way.

For a few glorious years in the late 70s and early 80s, these small islands were the epicentre of the most vibrant, exciting and groundbreaking scene around. This is the story of how British rock heavied up and changed the world once again…

* * *

The 1960s marked the dawn of the rock era. Pop's simple attractions had given way to something harder, heavier and more grown up, and the branches of the musical tree began to spread wildly: blues rock, psychedelia, West Coast rock, East Coast rock, country rock, heavy metal. A generation of impressionable would-be musicians were paying avid attention.

Fast Eddie Clarke (ex-Motörhead): Playing music was always the thing for me. I started when I was twelve or thirteen, started to see Eric Clapton and just wanted to do it. Then Hendrix comes along and blew me fucking head off.

Biff Byford (Saxon): I grew up in the 1960s. I listened to all the pop groups – the Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Kinks. My mum was a pianist, and my friend was in a blues band. We'd watch him play and I decided to learn the guitar a little bit. That's when I wanted to get involved in music.

Joe Elliott (Def Leppard): The first artist that I got into was Marc Bolan from T.Rex. Everything he did, the whole catalogue. I wanted to be Marc Bolan. David Bowie when he did *Starman* on *Top Of The Pops* – that blew me and everybody away.

Steve Harris (Iron Maiden): I used to listen to The Beatles and The Who and stuff like that. Then I started getting into more rock stuff, and that led to Wishbone Ash and then on to prog. Those early Genesis albums gave me goosebumps.

* * *

For many of these aspirant musicians, music offered an escape from the drudgery of real life, if not a direct route to fame and riches.

Rob Halford (Judas Priest): We all came from tough working-class backgrounds. Walsall and West Bromwich were pretty bleak. We could all

BRUCE DICKINSON: NEIL ZLOZOWER/ATLASICONS.COM; JESS COX: REX; TATLER: ROSS HALFIN

Saxon: "If people didn't like our songs we'd bin them and write some more."

relate to the need and the want of trying to break out of an unpleasant cycle.

Fast Eddie Clarke: I come from a working-class background. I never thought I'd make money out of music. My dream was to play my guitar and earn enough to eat and live. If I could do that I'd be happy for the rest of my life.

Biff Byford: In Barnsley, your main job choice was going down the pit. Mining was a good living, it wasn't awful. But I wanted to see the world a bit, meet some girls.

Joe Elliott: The ambition was just to be in a rock band. It's like: "I don't want to work in a factory all my life."

Rob Halford: We never really sat down as a band and said: "What's the battle plan?" Like any great thing that comes out of Britain, it had some apprenticeship, some dedication behind it.

Fast Eddie Clarke: None of the musicians back then wanted stardom or big fucking wads of money, they just wanted to play their music and make a crust. When I joined Motörhead it was just something to do. We didn't want to become stars, it was just a chance to play.

Brian Tatler (Diamond Head): When I started Diamond Head in 1976, the dream was just to make records and enjoy it. I had no idea how you got from forming a band with your friends to playing something huge like Wembley Stadium. It seemed impossible.

By the mid-70s, things had started to change. For some bands, the lure of America proved irresistible and they spent their time touring there, hoovering up money and whatever else was available. For others, years of success had bred complacency, arrogance or both.

"I DON'T THINK THERE WERE THAT MANY GREAT ROCK BANDS AROUND. A LOT OF THE BIG GUYS HAD RUN OUT OF STEAM BY SEVENTY-SIX OR SEVENTY-SEVEN."

Ashley Goodall (EMI A&R man)

Fast Eddie Clarke: I went to see Led Zeppelin at Earls Court in 1975. Fuck me, there was a forty-five minute drum solo, and Jimmy Page was fucking about with his guitar for an hour. You'd sit there and think: "I didn't fucking come here to see this."

Ashley Goodall (EMI A&R man): I don't think there were that many great rock bands around. A lot of the big guys had run out of steam by '76 or '77: Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin a little bit. Queen were sort of carrying on, being quite pop, but they had gone out of favour a bit.

DIAMOND HEAD
LIGHTNING TO THE NATIONS

Fast Eddie Clarke: The prog rock lot had gone a bit over the fucking top. The Yes's and Genesis's had lost sight of everything. They all had servants and Rolls-Royces. I just thought: "Fuck off you silly c**ts."

Brian Tatler: I loved Pink Floyd to death, but I couldn't get tickets to see them, and if you did get tickets then you'd be among ten thousand other people in a great big hall. At least in the pubs or clubs there was some excitement, some sweat.

Andy Dawson (Savage): Things were getting a bit tame, and then punk came along and kicked everybody up the arse.

British punk was born in the underground clubs of London but rapidly spread outwards, lighting up the cities of Britain like a series of detonations. Its plastered-on snarl and nihilistic world view was the antithesis of everything that had gone before. Love it or hate it, punk had to happen.

Brian Tatler: I hated the Bay City Rollers and The Osmonds and all that stuff, so when the Sex Pistols appeared on TV I thought it was great. I could play like Steve Jones, whereas I couldn't play like Ritchie Blackmore. I was like, "Let's not hang around – these guys are doing it." ▷

Jess Cox (Tygers Of Pan Tang): Most of the punk bands were awful, but some were good. We were well into The Clash, the Pistols, stuff like The Tubes. But we all loved Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath as well.

Biff Byford: We didn't really get on with the fashion – the bloody safety pins through the noses. We did take on the studs, though. There were a lot of studded jackets around at the time. We nicked that and turned it into our own style, as did Motörhead.

> **"NONE OF THE MUSICIANS BACK THEN WANTED STARDOM OR BIG WADS OF MONEY, THEY JUST WANTED TO PLAY THEIR MUSIC AND MAKE A CRUST."**
> Fast Eddie Clarke

Fast Eddie Clarke: Motörhead were accepted by all the punks. We had long hair, but we wore leather jackets and we played loud and fast. We were in the same family.

Rob Halford: The press just said: "Fuck off, heavy metal, it's over." We said: "No it's not." We saw that punk was gonna be a short-lived experience. I found it very insulting that someone would dismiss not only the bands but also the fans. So that made us even stronger.

Thunderstick (Samson): Punk came along and swept everything away. The first time I saw it, I thought: "These guys can't play their instruments." But then I quickly realised that it wasn't all to do with just playing the material. It was about a lifestyle.

Fast Eddie Clarke: Punk was refreshing. Especially when they said: "Fuck off everybody." I'd been saying that for years.

Brian Tatler: Punk brought things back down to the grass roots, didn't it? You could go and see a band in the pub. The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal adopted the do-it-yourself attitude.

* * *

Punk may have pitched itself as the sworn enemy of the 'dinosaur' bands, but it had the unforeseen side effect of galvanising some of the more clued-in longhairs. Motörhead, formed in London in 1976 by former Hawkwind bassist Lemmy, were one such group. Barnsley's Son Of A Bitch – soon to change their name to Saxon – were another.

Fast Eddie Clarke: The audiences at our early gigs were disenchanted rockers. They had long hair and leather jackets but they didn't like the punk thing. They were into Deep Purple and Black Sabbath back in the day, but they'd fucked off to America.

Biff Byford: Motörhead were flying the flag. They were big way before us. They were the ones busting down the doors.

Fast Eddie Clarke: It was a very British form of music. The fucking Americans weren't coming up with anything, anyway.

Andy Dawson: Saxon were going strong well before the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal kicked in.

Biff Byford: We were playing quite a few shows with a lot of youngsters in the crowd. It was quite an aggressive stage show. There was a lot running around and shouting. I think we took that from the punk bands.

Fast Eddie Clarke: I thought Saxon were fucking blinding. They were a great band, they had great tunes, and what a great bunch of guys. When they supported us on the *Bomber* tour I used to go out and sneak into the crowd to watch one of their tunes, *See The Light Shining*, every night.

Biff Byford: We were always chasing a record deal. We'd send cassette tapes off to people. If they didn't like one lot of songs, we'd throw them in the bin and write some more songs.

* * *

Around the same time, a gang of streetwise East Londoners were making a name for themselves in the pubs and clubs of the capital, most notably the Ruskin Arms in Manor Park. Their name was Iron Maiden, and they were led with gritty ambition by bassist Steve Harris.

Samson with Bruce Bruce (left) and Thunderstick (second from right).

SAMSON: GETTY

DEF LEPPARD

Def Leppard: the *really* early days.

Rob Verschoyle (childhood friend of Steve Harris): I met Steve when I was twelve and he was ten. The difference between the rest of us and Steve was dedication. He'd be playing bass all the time. He became a trainee draughtsman, but he gave that up to concentrate on playing. His whole life was like that. Anything he did, he went at it a hundred per cent.

Steve Harris: I wouldn't say I'm a control freak. I just like to get things done.

Neal Kay (DJ/founder, Heavy Metal Soundhouse): Since 1975 I'd been building up a small venue in Kingsbury as a heavy metal discotheque. It was known as The Bandwagon in the Prince Of Wales pub, but I rechristened it the Heavy Metal Soundhouse. The main room held about seven hundred people, and we had a fuckin' ginormous sound system. I kept badgering Geoff Barton at *Sounds* to come down, because I knew it was unique, and a great press story. It took a long time to convince him but in the end he came.

Geoff Barton (writing in *Sounds*, August 1978): "The decor resembles Dodge City, American B-movie Western style but, with alternating flashing lights/darkness, your eyes never really adjust to notice that much detail. The Bandwagon and the music that's played there is very much a present day reality, no matter what the fashion pundits might tell you. And to me, and a goodly number of other punters, it's like a little bit of heaven on earth."

Neal Kay: After Geoff Barton's double-page spread in *Sounds*, suddenly all these demo tapes started arriving from oppressed bands who couldn't get out. Among these tapes was the Iron Maiden demo.

Steve Harris: We did a four-track demo and gave it to Neal Kay.

Neal Kay: Steve and [Maiden singer] Paul Di'Anno brought it to me on one of the week nights. Steve said: "'Ere, mate, give this a listen when you've got a minute." I said: "You'll be lucky. I've got millions of tapes to listen to." But that night I put it in the player and listened to it. I thought: "Fuck me, this is going all the way." I phoned Steve up at two am and said: "You're going to be really rich, because what you've got here is nothing short of brilliant."

Steve Harris: He played it at the club and people began voting for it as their favourite track. We started getting into these *Sounds* charts, which were compiled from requests there. That's what got the ball rolling for Maiden.

"THINGS WERE GETTING A BIT TAME, AND THEN PUNK CAME ALONG AND KICKED EVERYBODY UP THE ARSE."

Andy Dawson (Savage)

Biff Byford: We played some universities with Iron Maiden, supporting a band called Nutz. The people who booked it said they'd never seen bands go down so well that sounded so crap. We quite liked that.

* * *

One hundred and fifty miles up the M1 in Sheffield, another equally ambitious group of youngsters had their eyes firmly set on rock stardom. Singer Joe Elliott, bassist Rick Savage and drummer Tony Kenning had formed the band Atomic Mass while still in their mid-teens. By the time they played their first gig, in a school canteen, they had changed the band's name to Def Leppard.

Biff Byford: Def Leppard were very young. They were four or five years younger than we were.

TYGERS OF PAN TANG
WILD CAT

Joe Elliott: We were a bunch of kids destined for factory life. We knew the opportunities we were being given. We were not going to screw this up.

Rick Savage: We were teenagers, and we had this belief that anything was possible. When that way of thinking is moulded into the group at that very early stage, it never really leaves you.

* * *

In January 1979, Def Leppard released their self-titled debut EP. With copies glued together by Joe Elliott and his mum, it was available via mail order and at gigs, costing the princely sum of £1.

Biff Byford: Def Leppard did the EP and sold it in *Sounds*. I like that early stuff. It was killer.

Joe Elliott: We were just a bunch of teenagers messing around, doing what we felt was right. But *Getcha Rocks Off* did have a vibe about it that was above and beyond what everyone else seemed to be doing. I think there was a good reason we got the deal that hundreds of other bands couldn't seem to get at the time.

Andy Dawson: Everybody I knew went out and brought that EP. There was a rock disco on Friday, and that would be played every time.

Joe Elliott: That naiveté can really drive you. And we weren't stupid. We learned our craft from listening to other people. We were students of Pete Townshend and Ray Davies and Plant and Page ▷

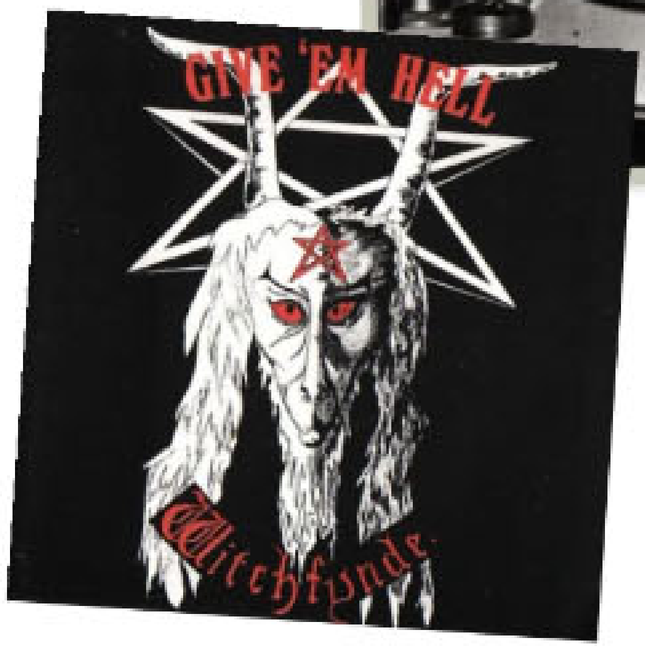
and Lennon and McCartney. We knew a good song when we heard one – and we just tried to rip off as many of 'em as we could.

Geoff Barton: After much phone-call badgering, Joe Elliott enticed me up to Sheffield in June 1979.

Joe Elliott: The first time Geoff Barton came to see us play was at Crookes Working Men's Club in Sheffield. I picked him up at the train station in my van – a two-seater so you could throw shit in the back.

Geoff Barton: I was bowled over. They put on a hugely impressive performance for the cap-wearing, ferret-bothering audience. A subsequent double-page feature in *Sounds*, plus strong support from local station Radio Hallam, helped secure them a contract with Phonogram.

Fast Eddie Clarke: Def Leppard I never really got along with. I know them now, but they weren't really my cup of tea back then. They were like a girly band, trying to appeal to girls.



* * *

The media was so enamoured with punk that it failed to notice this new movement springing up under its nose. All around the country, new bands were appearing at a weekly rate. In the north-east there were the Tygers Of Pan Tang, Raven and Fist. Scotland had Holocaust. The East Midlands had Witchfynde and Savage, while the West Midlands was represented by Diamond Head, the West Country had Jaguar. London had Samson, Angel Witch, Girlschool and, of course, Iron Maiden. And that was just the tip of the iceberg.

Ashley Goodall: The punk thing was starting to get boring, to be honest. I noticed there were a lot of kids going to heavy rock events. There was a bigger audience at The Bandwagon than there was at clubs like The Marquee.

Andy Dawson: Bands like Thin Lizzy, UFO and the Scorpions seemed so far away. They seemed other-wordly. But then you'd see some of these bands playing your local venue, and you started to think: "Maybe we can do it as well."

> "PUNK BROUGHT THINGS BACK DOWN THE GRASS ROOTS. YOU COULD GO AND SEE A BAND IN THE PUB. THE NWOBHM ADOPTED THE DO-IT-YOURSELF ATTITUDE."
> Brian Tatler

Jess Cox: What made us want to be in a band? I guess the answer is that it was easy to meet girls.

Biff Byford: There were tons of gigs, tons of girls.

Andy Dawson: A lot of bands were still playing covers. We used to do a set that would be half made up of songs from *Live And Dangerous* and half from *Strangers In The Night*. Then we started introducing our own songs.

The voice of rock radio: DJ Tommy Vance.

Thunderstick: Samson was the first band I joined that actually had a manager. We got a retainer wage, which was pretty good. We used to rehearse in a farmer's shed, with all these rotting vegetables in it. It had one power point that we'd run everything off.

Jess Cox: We were just out to make a glorious racket. We had no idea how the hell you structure a song. If you listen to some of our early tracks, you'll find that there's four bars here and seven bars there.

Biff Byford: We were playing really fast stuff – it was all *Never Surrender* and *Stand Up And Be Counted*. Just getting out on the streets, that was our message in those days.

Jess Cox: We had drainpipe jeans and fringes. I know that sounds hilarious now, but it was a big deal at the time, because flares were in and you had to have your hair parted in the middle.

Thunderstick: The mask came about because most drummers were faceless. They were hidden behind kits. So I thought: "I'll create a faceless drummer." I couldn't give it a name of Barry Graham Purkis, because then it would be a bit rubbish. So that's how Thunderstick came about.

* * *

Even the stuffed shirts at the BBC couldn't ignore the musical shifts that were happening. In November 1978, Radio 1 launched *The Friday Rock Show*, presented by gravel-voiced DJ Tommy Vance. Airing at 10pm every Friday, it was essential listening for any self-regarding rock fan who wanted to hear the lastet cutting-edge band.

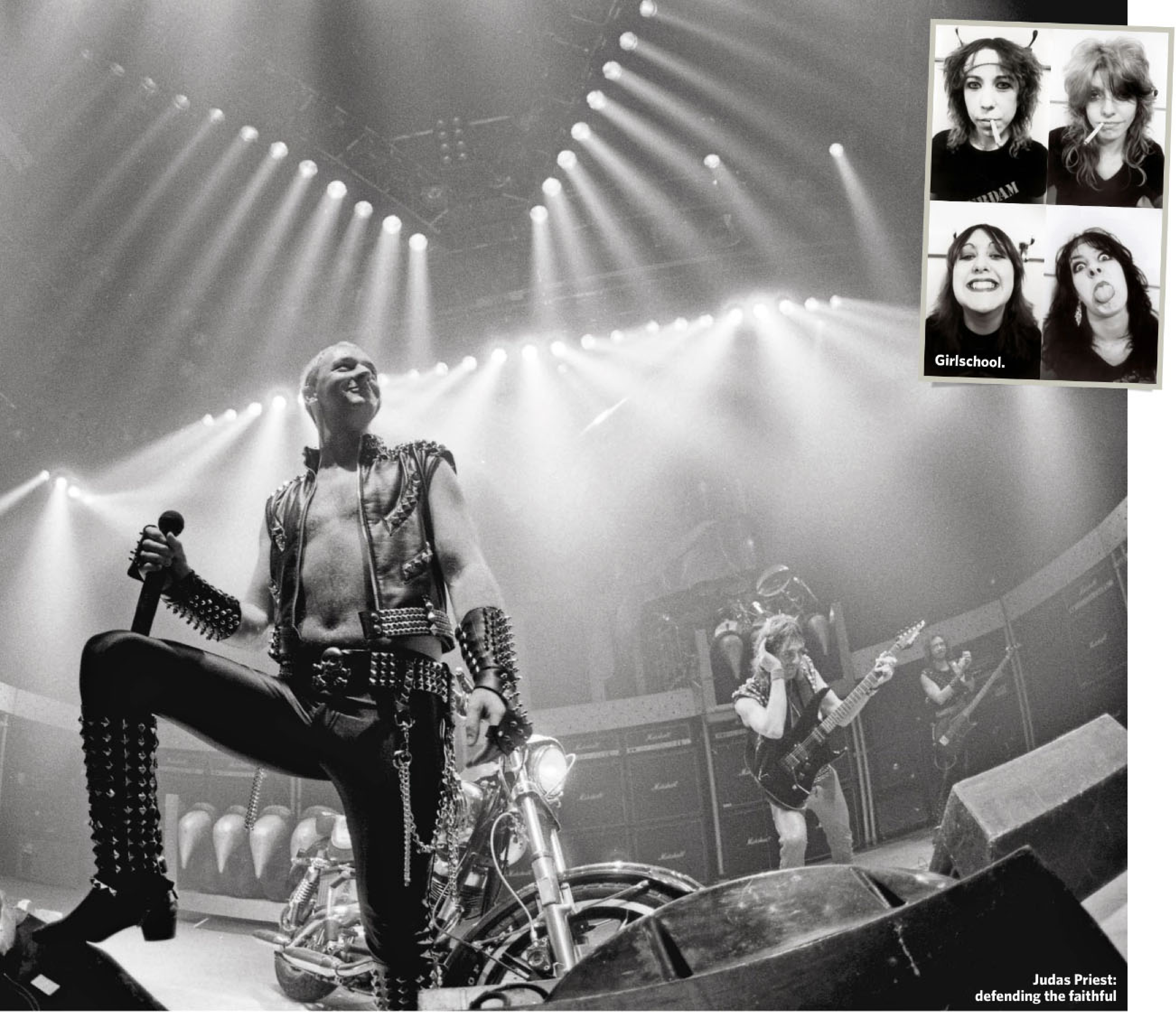
Tony Wilson (*Friday Rock Show* producer): Alan Freeman had been presenting the *Saturday Rock Show* on Radio 1 since 1973, but they decided that Fluff was too old for the job, and he left and went off to Capital Radio. I said: "Well, we need to find somebody else to do another rock show." I decided that Tommy Vance was the best option, against the better judgment of Derek Chinnery, the controller of Radio 1.

Joe Elliott: At the time, there were local radio stations that had their own rock show. But this was the only one on national radio. So when you tuned in to listen to Tommy, you knew you were in for an education.

Tommy Vance (speaking in 2002): The overriding memory of the *Rock Show* was that I was working for an audience that appreciated it, they liked it and were grateful for the fact I liked it and wanted to play it. But it wasn't just me, because I had a superb producer, Tony Wilson.

Tony Wilson: I had completely free rein, because nobody in the management knew or cared what we were doing. They were just happy to have someone who was interested enough to do something like that, as long as we didn't cause any outrage.

TOMMY VANCE: REX


Girlschool.

Judas Priest: defending the faithful

Tony Wilson: People say it was quite influential. We did get large mailbags of post every week, and that was an indicator that people were listening. I think it was one of the ways for people to hear music and engage with the new rock movement, and they did.

Joe Elliott: He may not be regarded as an innovator in the same way as, say, John Peel, but for all rock fans in Britain at the time [Tommy Vance's] show was massively important. He's never been replaced, and he never can be.

Across the country, things were beginning to heat up. Aside from the release of Def Leppard's debut EP, 1979 saw the glorious one-two of Motörhead's *Overkill* and *Bomber*, as well as the debut album from Saxon.

Fast Eddie Clarke: We didn't know we were making these great albums at the time, but we loved 'em to bits. *Overkill* was absolutely fantastic. We got a new lease of life, and it continued into *Bomber*. We were just fucking cooking like fuck.

Biff Byford: It really took us by surprise, how popular we became very quickly.

Neal Kay: Probably the most significant gig I did at The Music Machine was when I put Samson, Iron Maiden and Angel Witch on in May 1979.

Thunderstick: When we played The Music Machine for the very first time, I couldn't believe the amount of people that came through the door. Some of the fans had been laying in wait, waiting for punk to run its course. Once they had done, they came up and pledged allegiance to the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal.

Geoff Barton (writing in *Sounds*): "The band, dressed in cheesecloth shirts and loon pants, tossed their long hair, pouted, posed and punched their firsts into the air after each agonising guitar solo."

Alan Lewis (editor, *Sounds*): I coined NWOBHM (New Wave Of British Heavy Metal) as a front-page headline. But it was sort of an in-joke. We were always hailing something or other as 'The New Wave Of…'

Thunderstick: I got the front cover of *Sounds*, with that edition where the phrase The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal was coined.

Biff Byford: We kept getting little reviews in *Sounds* and *Melody Maker*. They kept doing little reviews about us. But it really started to happen when Geoff Barton came to see us and a did a huge two-page piece on us in *Sounds*.

Bruce Dickinson (Samson): NWOBHM was a fiction, really, an invention of Geoff Barton and *Sounds*. It was a cunning ruse to boost circulation. Having said that, it did represent a lot of bands that were utterly ignored by the mainstream media. Because of that it became real and people got behind it.

Brian Tatler: After the *Sounds* piece, you suddenly thought: "Okay, there's other bands around the country doing what we're doing, they're the same age." We end up travelling to Leeds or Newcastle or London. Suddenly our horizons were opened. ▷

Rob Halford and then-*Sounds* journalist Geoff Barton.

Joe Elliott: "We were such young kids."

TOM PETTY
THE JAM
sounds
THE NEW FACE OF HEAVY METAL

Thanks to the business acumen of their new manager, Rod Smallwood, Iron Maiden were jostling with Def Leppard for the position of the NWOBHM's top dogs.

Ashley Goodall: I think you have to differentiate between Def Leppard and Iron Maiden. Def Leppard had a more American angle; Maiden had a punk ethos about them, though the were definitely a rock band. They had that street-y, London attitude.

Paul Di'Anno (Iron Maiden, speaking in 1980): We still want to stay as close as possible to the kids who got us up here in the first place. I don't want people to start muttering: "Oh look, there's so-and-so from Iron Maiden there. Shall we talk to him, or shan't we?" Bollocks. They should be able to come over and say: "Hello mate, how is it? I thought you played like a c**t the other night."

> **"EVERYBODY WANTED THEIR NEW WAVE OF BRITISH HEAVY METAL BAND. ALL OF A SUDDEN, THESE MAJOR LABELS STARTED TO APPEAR."**
>
> Jess Cox

Ashley Goodall: I first saw Maiden at the Swan in Hammersmith. It was like a football crowd. They had a hard-core following with the T-shirts. I thought: "This is a great gig. There's something here that's really good."

Bruce Dickinson: It was blindingly obvious that Maiden were going to be massive. This hyper-kinetic band, it was really a force of nature. Paul Di'Anno, he was okay, but I thought: "I could really do something with that band!"

Ashley Goodall: Iron Maiden stood out because they'd taken on some of the punk ethos, which was to do your own thing, put your own record out, make your own life. Maybe they borrowed some of that from the punk bands.

Steve Harris: We decided to release *The Soundhouse Tapes* (in November 1979) because we'd do really well at gigs, then afterwards there'd be all these fans asking where they could buy one of our records. When we told them there wasn't any yet they couldn't believe it. They'd seen the charts in *Sounds* and assumed we must already have a record deal of some kind, but we didn't. And I think that's when we really got the idea of putting the demo out as an actual record.

By the end of 1979 and into 1980, the NWOBHM gathered pace. Every week, a new single appeared from some hitherto unknown band, released on an independent label such as Heavy Metal Records, Bronze or Newcastle's Neat Records. The scene's big guns weren't resting on their laurels, either – Def Leppard and Iron Maiden both released their debut albums, *On Through The Night* and *Iron Maiden*, in 1980, while Saxon released two stone-cold classics in the shape of *Wheels Of Steel* and *Strong Arm Of The Law*. And then there was *Metal For Muthas*, a compilation-cum-lightning rod of this new wave of bands.

METAL FOR MUTHAS

Joe Elliott: We had the time of our lives making *On Through The Night*. We were such young kids – Rick Allen was fifteen, I was nineteen – and we were recording our first album at Tittenhurst Park, where John Lennon lived before he sold it to Ringo. And I drew the long straw – I got Lennon's old bedroom. The view was amazing.

Biff Byford: 1980 was a big year for us and for the heavy metal genre in general. Everything was just right. There was a massive groundswell and a lot of young fans were getting into metal.

Joe Elliott: *On Through The Night* did pretty well for us. We sold out Sheffield City Hall, it went Top 20 in the UK. But we were a work in progress. Compared to the first Boston album, the first Zeppelin album, the first Van Halen album, it's Wycombe Wanderers to their Chelsea.

Ashley Goodall: There was a studio in EMI that wasn't too expensive, so I thought why don't we get everybody in there and do a good, rough-and-ready compilation of what's going on at the moment? Basically, aggregate what's going on and make a statement. That was *Metal For Muthas*.

Andy Dawson: I remember seeing Iron Maiden at our local theatre on the *Metal For Muthas* tour. It was the first time I remember seeing an unknown band, and they nailed it. They came on stage looking and acting like they were already successful. I'd never seen that level of confidence before.

Inevitably, the Top 20 success of Def Leppard and Iron Maiden spurred the interest of the other big

Iron Maiden and Man In Black Ritchie Blackmore.

Jess Cox of Tygers Of Pan Tang.

labels. All around the country at the gigs, the denim-clad crowds were peppered with A&R representatives.

Jess Cox: Everybody wanted their New Wave Of British Heavy Metal band. All of a sudden these major labels started to appear. I remember playing Sunderland Mecca on a Friday night, and the head of labels from Virgin, EMI and CBS had flown up.

Andy Dawson: It wasn't like the major labels all swept in and started pumping money. That happened for a few bands, but the rest of us were just working our arses off trying to make this happen.

Jess Cox: The guy we had managing us at the time said: "MCA want to sign you. It means you get your rent paid and six pounds a week." We were, like: "Whoah, that sounds good. Yeah, we'll do that."

Andy Dawson: There were a few bands that made the jump to a major, like Saxon and Iron Maiden and Def Leppard obviously. But for the majority it felt like an independent scene. That was the beauty of it – it wasn't contrived or controlled by a record company executive saying: "This is what you need to do."

Bruce Dickinson: In Samson we only ever had about thirty quid a week out of the band. But we were bonkers, completely out of our gourds, and we'd signed the document.

Jess Cox: In the Tygers we didn't have two pennies to rub together. We'd kip on floors or wherever we could find.

While the music industry turned its beady eye on the NWOBHM scene, the bands themselves were treating each other with as much suspicion as they were camaraderie.

Brian Tatler: I think there was a rivalry. Because, of course, we're all trying to make it, and you don't want somebody else to step on you.

Joe Elliott: We didn't ask to be included in the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, we were just told we were in it. We were happy to take the press, but the fact that it kept coming with this NWOBHM typecast, it became more of a "What the hell is this?" thing.

> **"I THINK A LOT OF ENERGY IN THE NWOBHM WAS FRUSTRATION. IT WAS THE START OF THE THATCHER ERA..."**
>
> Andy Dawson

Jess Cox: It wasn't this great big family. Bands were starting to go: "Hold on, there are too many other bands, we're not getting attention." But we did get quite friendly with Maiden.

Brian Tatler: You'd go and check the competition: Angel Witch, Samson, Maiden, the Leps, Saxon. We'd meet them occasionally, but it was a bit insular. We'd judge everything: "Are they good? Can we learn from them? Can we steal from them?"

Fast Eddie Clarke: We didn't mix with Thin Lizzy or Judas Priest or that lot. The other bands didn't want to talk to us. We weren't looked on as musicians.

Biff Byford: To tell you the truth, we were so fucking busy that we didn't have much chance to look at what everybody else was doing.

Fast Eddie Clarke: We did notice Iron Maiden. Our paths crossed, but they were a bit stand-offish. There was still this thing that Motörhead were this loud, antisocial juggernaut. And people were scared of us because of our Hells Angels contacts.

Joe Elliott: At one gig, I went on stage in a pair of bright red trousers, and a white shirt covered in hearts. That was me going: "I'm not fucking wearing a leather jacket and jeans like every other bastard band in this movement that we don't think we're in anyway."

Jess Cox: We went to London to do some shows with Maiden at the Marquee, then all of a sudden bands started coming to see us. Judas Priest turned up at one gig. Gary Moore got up on stage and bloody played with us.

Unlike punk, there was no generational divide here. The new breed of metal bands viewed the bands that came before with reverence, while the original masters were curious to see what they'd inspired.

Andy Dawson: You wanted to emulate these bands, not kill them off. Bands like Rainbow were still massive. Everybody still loved then. When you went to a rock disco, you'd still hear stuff like that.

Ashley Goodall: Ozzy Osbourne turned up to see Maiden at one of the early gigs at the Music ▷

JESS COX: REX

Motörhead: Lemmy, 'Philthy' Phil Taylor and 'Fast' Eddie Clarke.

Machine, so there was a lot of interest in the new generation of bands.

Rob Halford: We went out with Iron Maiden, Def Leppard. It's what you should do, no matter who you are or what music you play. We're all on the same journey. We've all been through barely affording gas and sleeping in the van. That's part of your apprenticeship.

KK Downing: I'd never heard of Iron Maiden until someone told me that they were going to support us on the *British Steel* tour. Then they started to get mouthy in the press, saying they were going to blow the bollocks off Judas Priest and all this sort of stuff. I said: "I appreciate the attitude, like, but let's fuck 'em off and get somebody who appreciates us!" But they did it and it was fine. I'm glad that they emerged and became a force to be reckoned with, and gained their own identity, musically, visually and in every way possible.

* * *

Judas Priest themselves were the bridge between the old guard and the new wave. Their debut album, *Rocka Rolla*, had come out in 1974, when many of the NWOBHM musicians were still at school, and they'd survived the punk wars largely unscathed. Their sixth album, *British Steel*, was released in April 1980, as the movement began to broaden.

Rob Halford: The title of the album was a statement in itself. Sheffield steel was the inspiration for *British Steel*. And we should all be proud that British musicians are responsible for this force in music called heavy metal.

KK Downing: We'd made a few albums by then. We weren't exactly floundering around, but everything did lock in with *British Steel*: the artwork, the songs, the stage clothes. Everything consolidated who we were and where we were going. It was almost like a rebel's almanac.

Rob Halford: There was a lot of crap going down in the UK. Margaret Thatcher had been in power for quite a number of years. The recession was going on, people had no jobs and no money. Everything the government had said they were going to try to do was just a crock of shit, and people were pushing back. All of that's in there, you know: *'Completely wasted, out of work and down'* – no one cares, I'm going to break the law. We weren't giving people affirmation to break the law, but we could understand their frustration.

Andy Dawson: I think a lot of energy in the NWOBHM was frustration. It was the start of the Thatcher era, which was quite destructive.

* * *

If there was one event that acted as a lightning rod for British rock – not just NWOBHM, but all of it – then it was the inaugural Monsters Of Rock festival held at the Donington Park racetrack in Castle Donington, Leicestershire on August 16, 1980. The braindchild of young promoter Paul Loasby and his business partner Maurice Jones, the first line-up featured Rainbow as headliners, supported by Judas Priest, Scorpions, April Wine, Saxon, Riot and Touch. There had been other outdoor events before, but this was the only one dedicated solely to heavy music.

Rob Halford: We were very aware that it was the first festival of its type in the UK and was a major event in that respect. All the festivals that had happened in the UK before had had a cross-section of bands, so this was the first to go with specifically one type of music. Our reaction when we first heard about it was that we'd like to give it a crack.

Biff Byford: When they asked us to play Monsters Of Rock we had no fucking idea what it was.

Paul Loasby (Monsters Of Rock promoter): The amount of rain was unbelievable. I'd borrowed money personally to put on this show. And the night before, at four in the morning when a monsoon is coming down in Castle Donington, I'm sitting there with a bottle of Scotch in my hand thinking: "This is the ultimate, the biggest disaster in the history of rock'n'roll and I'm going to lose everything." Not that I had anything, but I was going to lose it anyway.

> **"ONCE THE AMERICANS GOT HOLD OF THIS THING COMING FROM BRITAIN AND TOOK IT INTO THEIR OWN KIND OF STYLE AND APPROACH, EVERYTHING WENT GLOBAL."**
>
> Rob Halford

Neal Kay: I compered the gig. I was nervous – I've never faced a crowd that big before. But when I walked out on that huge stage, the first ten rows were all Soundhouse members.

Biff Byford: When we walked on that stage we'd done a hundred thousand records. I would imagine that ninety-nine per cent of the people in that audience had got *Wheels Of Steel*. So it was fantastic for us. It was our first festival gig, the first time we'd played to an audience of over three thousand. The roar when we went out on stage was incredible. When I walked off I thought: "Follow that." That was a fucking great gig.

Neal Kay: The atmosphere was fantastic. There were campfires about twilight time.

Biff Byford: This was the new generation of heavy metal. This was our music – fucking have it!

* * *

After so many years in the doldrums, British rock now seemed unstoppable. And then in 1981 the unthinkable happened when those perpetual outcasts Motörhead managed to reached No.1 in the UK chart with their steel-plated live album, *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith*.

Fast Eddie Clarke: I suppose having a number one record got us a bit of respect. I can't remember who we went to see, but David Coverdale was there and he said: "Let me buy you a drink, guys." And I'm thinking: "Fuck me, that's unheard of."

Jess Cox: It was only years later that I realised how many of these bands there were.

Biff Byford: You've got Judas Priest, you've got Motörhead, you've got Saxon, you've got Maiden… it was endless.

Ashley Goodall: It became clear very quickly who the leaders were. Leppard were slightly ahead in a way, but it did kind of blow out a bit by eighty-one. Once Maiden were away it was a completely different game.

Jess Cox: Iron Maiden and Def Leppard had people behind them in the know. They knew how it was all going to pan out.

Ashley Goodall: I'm a believer that if you're going to be huge, you're going to be huge. No one else was actually that good.

* * *

For the NWOBHM's leading lights, the next logical step would be to set their sights on America. Def Leppard had seemingly made their intentions clear with the track *Hello America* on *On Through The Night*– something that prompted a backlash in *Sounds*, and saw them bottled at the 1980 Reading Festival for their troubles. The old cliché about Britain hating success stories seemed to ring true, although the fact remained that America was there for the taking – at least for a select few.

Biff Byford: Def Leppard went off and did a different thing. They went down the American route.

Rick Savage (Def Leppard): *Hello America?* I swear to God, we really weren't that intelligent. It was the lyrics of a kid fantasising. I can see how people read into it, but it was way more innocent than that, way more naive.

Joe Elliott: The legend about us getting bottled off at Reading 1980 is a myth, really. We probably had six or seven bottles of piss thrown up, and maybe a tomato, but it didn't put us off. That 'backlash' was all blown out of proportion. We're living proof that bad reviews make no difference.

Fast Eddie Clarke: We didn't think: "We want to break America." We didn't have any delusions of grandeur. No fucker over there would touch us anyway.

Joe Elliott: Iron Maiden had been to America a month before us. I didn't see them getting any flak. Nor should they have. So why the hell did we?

Steve Harris: We were never obsessed with breaking America. We always planned to ▷

It's electric: princes among men, Diamond Head.

come out here and give everything we'd got, and they'd either like it or they wouldn't. Fortunately for us they liked it. In fact they bloody loved it. But it was always a challenge. We didn't do things the normal way.

Glenn Tipton (Judas Priest): If we hadn't gone to America we would probably only have lasted for another three or four years.

Rob Halford: We were definitely aware of what was going on with MTV [which launched in August 1981]. It was a game changer.

Joe Elliott: The fledging MTV, having nothing to play, liked the idea of this young UK rock band, so they picked up on *Bringin' On The Heartbreak* [from Leppard's second album, 1981's *High 'n' Dry*]. So six months, maybe a year after *High 'n' Dry* came out, we started getting these telexes saying: "Your album is selling six thousand copies a week. Then it was ten, fifteen, twenty thousand copies a week. It was heading toward platinum by the time we had *Pyromania* in the bag.

> **"IT HELPED KEEP ROCK GOING. EVERYTHING WOULD SOUND DIFFERENT WITHOUT THE NEW WAVE OF BRITISH HEAVY METAL."**
>
> Brian Tatler

* * *

Throughout 1982 and into 1983, the stream of bands releasing singles and albums didn't abate. To the casual observer, the British rock and metal scene looked in rude health. But in reality it was starting to run on fumes. Thanks to Def Leppard and Iron Maiden's Stateside success, America was waking up to what was happening across the Atlantic. And it wanted a piece of the action.

Andy Dawson: By 1983, when Savage finally released our first album, it seemed like the British scene was beginning to peter out.

Brian Tatler: A lot of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal bands had given up, split up, been dropped – including Diamond Head. The attention had gone onto the American bands. It was a tough period for a lot of British bands.

Rob Halford: Once the Americans got hold of this thing coming from Britain and took it into their own kind of style and approach, everything went global.

Fast Eddie Clarke: I remember going to LA with the first Fastway album and hearing about Mötley Crüe. They were calling them 'the LA Motörhead'.

Biff Byford: We supported Mötley Crüe. They loved us so much they invited us out on their first tour. It was a great tour.

Andy Dawson: When we did our first *Kerrang!* interview, the journalist, Xavier Russell, was banging on about how much this band called Metallica loved Savage. And we were like: "Who?"

Fast Eddie Clarke: Motörhead were two years too early. I was fucking surprised when it all kicked in with Metallica and that lot. They were playing exactly what we were playing, and doing fantastic business.

* * *

Def Leppard's *Pyromania* and Judas Priest's *Screaming For Vengeance* were huge hits in America, but at home the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal scene was rapidly deflating. By the end of that year it was all over bar the shouting.

Nearly four decades on, the legacy of the British bands of the late 70s and early 80s remains as strong as ever. The more obvious success stories of that golden era – Maiden, Leppard, Saxon, Motörhead – speak for themselves. But the ambition, independence and energy of the period mark it out as the last time British rock and metal truly punched above its weight on the world stage.

Biff Byford: It was a hugely important era. Massively important.

Jess Cox: People look back and see the wonderful naivety and innocence of it.

Andy Dawson: I don't think any of us realised we were part of something new. We were emulating something that we loved that was already there. But because we were young and innocent and a bit stupid, it brought something new to it.

Fast Eddie Clarke: Maybe we did change things. We certainly changed things from the way they were in the early seventies.

Ashley Goodall: Heavy rock music had been out of favour for about five years, and bands like Maiden gave it a kick. It made it cool to be into it again. It was okay to be a heavy rocker again.

Brian Tatler: I really think it was an important time for British music. It helped keep rock going. Just look at how amazingly Iron Maiden have done over the last forty years. Everything would sound different without the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal.

Bruce Dickinson: Years ago, someone asked: "What's the secret of Maiden's success?" I said:"I wish it was complicated, but it's just: don't let people down." Don't let people down. I can live with that on my headstone.

Steve Harris: We always stuck at what we believed in. I'm proud of that.

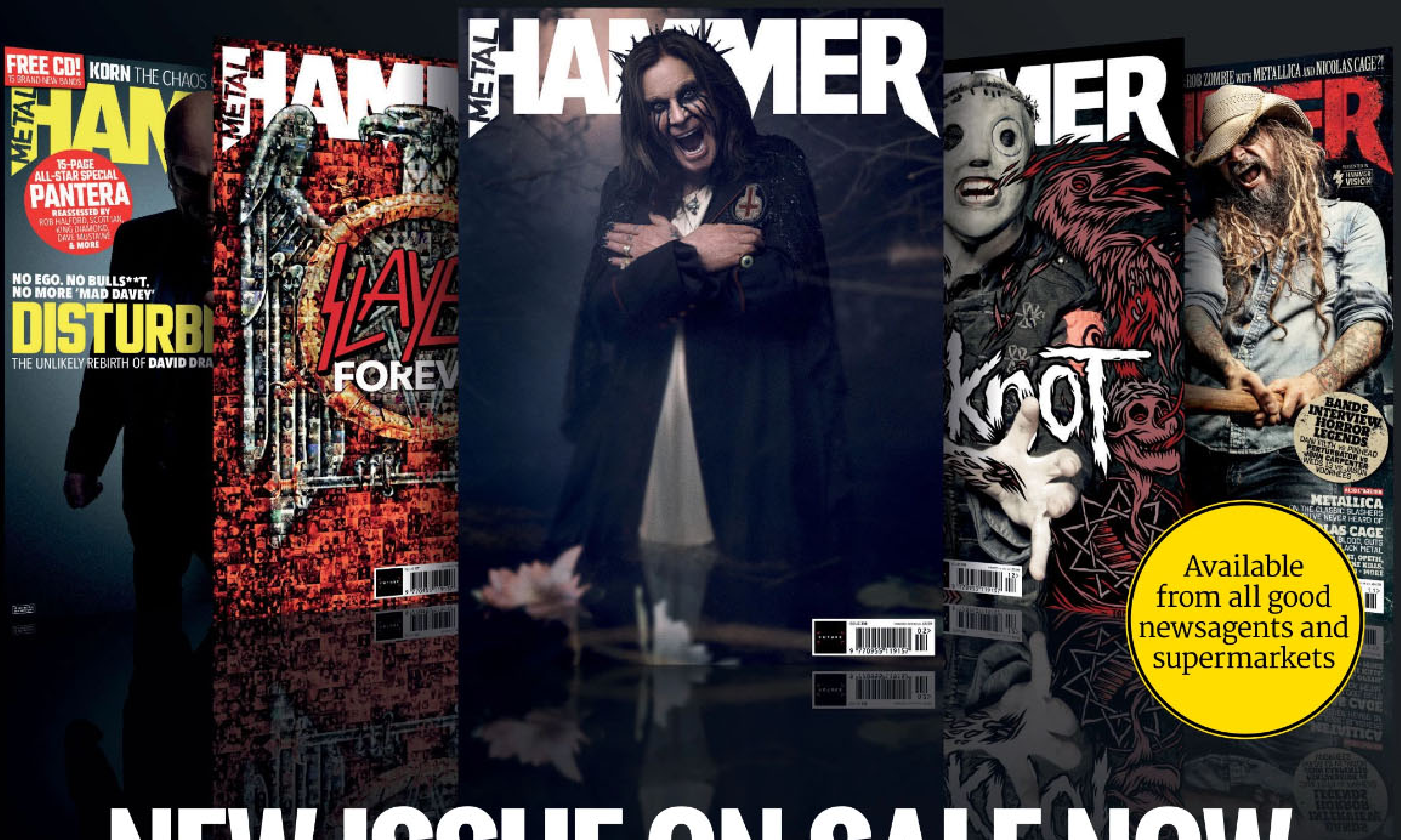
Biff Byford: We were singing songs for that generation about motorcycles and women and having a great time. People just loved it, really.

Andy Dawson: People have kept a real love of that time, and are looking for more of it. I'm sure they'd love to see younger bands. It would be great to see a bunch of eighteen- or nineteen-year-olds coming out, doing something like that, with that kind of energy. It would be a fresh kick up the arse.

Biff Byford: It was very British, but it shot round the fucking world. It changed music.

THE UK'S BIGGEST HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE

METAL HAMMER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THE SONGS THAT FORGED METAL 1977-1982

Influential 80s anthems...

Words: Geoff Barton, Scott Rowley, Malcolm Dome, Siân Llewellyn, Ian Fortnam & Jonathan Selzer

Killing Joke: an influence on a new generation (including Metallica).

SUZY IS A HEADBANGER

RAMONES *(1977)*

The way the Ramones dressed – bikers leathers, t-shirts and ripped jeans – became the unofficial uniform for metalheads. The way they played (no nonsense, brutally fast, no ballads, no acoustic guitars) caught the imagination of a new generation of metal musicians. and the stuff they wrote about (daft, exciting stuff like drugs, glue-sniffing, violence and nazis) brought focus to a genre that had disappeared into fantasy and horror. *Suzy* even addressed metal's favourite form of 'dancing'…

ACE OF SPADES

MOTÖRHEAD *(1980)*

Steppenwolf might have sung about 'heavy metal thunder' first, but the song that illustrates it best has gotta be Lemmy's relentless ode to cards, dice and dancing with the Devil. Gambling may be for fools, but with a soundtrack like this, it's the way we like it, baby…

BACK IN BLACK

AC/DC *(1980)*

With a riff that launched a thousand identi-riffs, the title track of AC/DC's first record with Brian Johnson at the helm was a terrifying statement of intent. The chord stabs can't be argued with while Angus wows us with two solos. As a metal anthem it's oft copied, never bettered.

LAST CARESS

MISFITS *(1980)*

'I got something to say/I killed your baby today…' A Dave Vanian-style vocal, a Ramones-style backing track and a handful of very sick lyrics… and horror punk is born. Future members of Metallica and GN'R vow to cover Misfits songs when they grow up…

BLACK METAL

VENOM *(1982)*

Geordie guttersnipes Venom somehow contrived to invent not one but two all-new music genres: death metal and (as heard on this stomach-turning track) black metal. No one had ever heard music like this before. No one ever wanted to again. But inspired by the antics of Cronos and his cronies, hundreds of like-minded bands would soon spew forth.

Ramones: an influence on metal music and clobber.

WHEELS OF STEEL

SAXON *(1980)*

The Barnsley stormers shook up the NWOBHM with this strident song, one that harked back towards the golden age of Motörhead and AC/DC. It also had a contemporary sound, thanks in part to an in-yer-face production that enhanced its power.

CRAZY TRAIN

OZZY OSBOURNE *(1980)*

After having been ousted from Black Sabbath, Ozzy's first solo single proved he was still worthy of his Prince Of Darkness title. Teaming up with guitarist Randy Rhoads, *Crazy Train* fused a bass line reminiscent of *Papa Was A Rolling Stone* with one of metal's greatest guitar solos.

C'MON LET'S GO

GIRLSCHOOL *(1981)*

Equal parts Ramones and Motörhead, *C'Mon Let's Go* sounded like you always hoped the Runaways would. Girlschool tore up the unwritten rules for women in rock: they weren't self-absorbed, fragile, tortured or mysterious. They kicked ass.

NUMBER OF THE BEAST

IRON MAIDEN *(1982)*

The title track of the first Maiden album to feature Bruce Dickinson on vocals set the metal template that the Irons would take to record-breaking levels over the following decades. Adrian Smith and Dave Murray's interlocking six-strings showed the world that twin-guitar bands didn't have to sound like Thin Lizzy, while Dickinson's air-raid siren howl and 'Arry's thunderous bass sealed the deal.

AM I EVIL?

DIAMOND HEAD *(1982)*

Made internationally popular by Metallica, this song is oddly one of the foundations on which the thrash genre was built. Oddly? Yep, because Diamond Head owed more to Led Zep than to Motörhead. However, *Am I Evil?* – with its pace, power and dark intent – was to be the blueprint for much that was to happen in the 80s.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

KISS *(1982)*

If Kiss had somewhat lost their way over the previous few years, this put them right back on track as one of the greatest anthemic bands of all time. Here was a song with a mighty riff and a massive chorus, reinvigorating their appeal to the metal audience.

HOLY DIVER

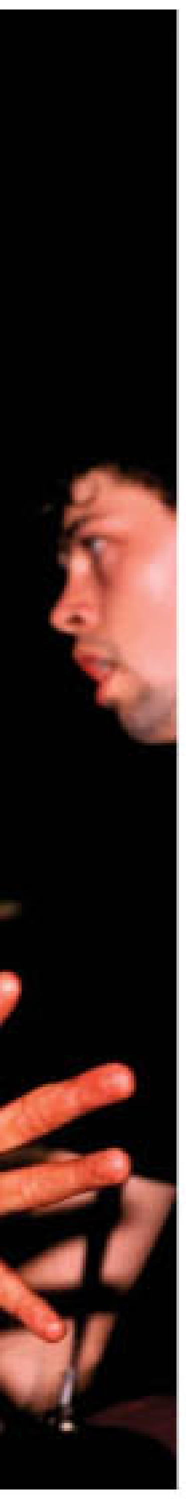
DIO *(1983)*

After successful spells with Rainbow and Sabbath, Ronnie James Dio strode out on his own, making a formidable statement with the title track of the first Dio album. It encapsulated everything that had made his name – articulate lyrics, a mythically inspired melody, a soaring vocal plus a stirring guitar.

PHOTOGRAPH

DEF LEPPARD *(1983)*

Leppard's first hit in America – long before they had significant success at home – saw the band transcend their



NWOBHM beginnings and morph into stadium-fillers. The epic 'gang's all here' chorus and the guitar sound's metallic sheen (courtesy of *Back In Black* producer Mutt Lange) would prove the blueprint for the pop metal explosion of the mid 80s.

SHOUT AT THE DEVIL

MÖTLEY CRÜE *(1983)*

While Mötley would go on to make waves with their later, poppier releases, it was the title track from their second album that solidified their status as one of the most metallic-sounding Sunset Strip bands. *Shout At The Devil* combined a shoutalong chorus and an ominous Satanic lyric (one misunderstood by the mainstram media, of course).

ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE

SCORPIONS *(1984)*

This is the defining song of the great German band's lengthy history. It's a bold, powerhouse march, mixing a potent tune with intense musicianship. It's one of those songs that helped to give big-hair music such a massive chart-busting boost.

ANIMAL (FUCK LIKE A BEAST)

WASP *(1984)*

There's no trace of misty-eyed romanticism here as WASP turn the act of making lurve into a base, animalistic affair. *Fuck Like A Beast* tested the boundaries of metal's decency and found them wanting. The irony was, however, that when *Kerrang!* featured Blackie Lawless on its cover, WH Smith banned the issue because the singer was covered in blood – not because he was promoting use of the F-word.

ROUND AND ROUND

RATT *(1984)*

One of the cornerstones of the early days of MTV, not only is *Round And Round* the most famous track of Ratt's career, but it also helped to make LA the commercial capital of the hard rock world in the mid 1980s. Deceptively simple, one of the reasons for its stature is the brilliant guitar sound from Warren De Martini – the man who gave hair metal its most cutting-edge riffs.

EIGHTIES

KILLING JOKE *(1984)*

Killing Joke put the titanic might of Zeppelin and the riff-propelled metal doom of Sabbath through a hyper-cranked punk'n'funk filter to create a roaring apocalyptic holocaust. Latterly, Kurt Cobain translated its signature, grunge-presaging riff into Nirvana's *Come As You Are.*

GETTY IMAGES X3

THE SONGS THAT FORGED
THRASH

Anthrax guitarist **Scott Ian** selects some of the lesser-known heavy sounds that inspired him in the days before thrash metal

Venom: evil comes from the north. Tyneside to be precise.

WITCHING HOUR

VENOM *(1981)*

For us metal fans, Venom was huge kick in the ass. And the way that Venom dressed, with the satanic imagery, they were like an evil version of Kiss. At the time, '81-'82, Venom was the most extreme band in metal. *Witching Hour* is just so brutal and creepy-sounding.

HELLRAISER/ ACTION

RAVEN *(1981)*

Like Venom, Raven were a thrash band before thrash existed. Raven had a pop sensibility that Venom never had. With this medley of two Sweet songs, they turned something that was classic rock into a thrash anthem. There was so much energy in what they were doing.

SWORDS AND TEQUILA

RIOT *(1981)*

Riot were not a thrash band, they were a metal band from New York. And just from a purely headbanging perspective, we loved what they did. Riot gave us a kick in the ass that we really hadn't felt before. What Riot did was more aggressive than what had come before. In the early 80s, *Swords And Tequila* was a true metal anthem.

MARCH OF THE CRABS

ANVIL *(1982)*

Back in '82, so many bands were in awe of Anvil. Their second record, *Metal On Metal*, was a classic of its time. A lot of that album is straight-up rock, but *March Of The Crabs* is a thrashy instrumental with a really aggressive feel and attitude to it.

FAST AS A SHARK

ACCEPT *(1982)*

This is proto-thrash. The intro is this crazy German folk song, then there's the sound of a needle scratching the record, and a scream, and then this riff comes in with the fastest double-bass drumming anyone had ever heard. And it still stands up today as one of the heaviest songs ever written.

SATAN'S FALL

MERCYFUL FATE *(1983)*

Back in 1983 there was no better band on the planet than Mercyful Fate. *Satan's Fall* is a real thrash metal opus – 11 minutes of thrash riffs, one after another. The album, *Melissa*, is what people need to listen to if they want to hear the beginnings of this type of music. *Melissa* is one of the templates for thrash metal.

INSTITUTIONALIZED

SUICIDAL TENDENCIES *(1983)*

Suicidal Tendencies were true originals. They put metal and punk together before anybody else did. This was the beginning of crossover. That first Suicidal record was so influential. It was fast, brutal, with huge hooks. *Institutionalized* is a song that everybody should know.

MERCILESS ONSLAUGHT

METAL CHURCH *(1984)*

The album this is from, *Ground Zero*, is super-super metal, but these guys could also write great hooks. *Merciless Onslaught* is an instrumental, and it's exactly what it advertises itself to be – a merciless onslaught of thrash riffs. Those riffs were way ahead of their time. The first time I heard *Merciless Onslaught* I thought: this is some 'next level' shit!

GOD IS BROKE

D.R.I. *(1985)*

This is the perfect combination of punk, hardcore and metal. In the early 80s, hardcore bands like D.R.I. and Corrosion Of Conformity were listening to metal bands like Slayer and Anthrax and incorporating that into their sound. *God Is Broke* is like most of the songs on the D.R.I. album *Dealing With It* – basically it's a short, sharp punch to the face.

TRAPPED

CRUMBSUCKERS *(1986)*

Crumbsuckers were a New York hardcore band unlike any other. In fact I always considered them a metal band. Most of the bands that were doing crossover in the 80s came from the punk scene, but the Crumbsuckers were metal guys adding hardcore to the mix. *Trapped* is from their first album, *Life Of Dreams*, and it's straight-up metal with these insane riffs and leads. The Crumbsuckers were a pretty obscure band, but they had a huge influence on me.

CARRY
— ON —
SCREAMING!

1979. **Ozzy Osbourne**, astronaut. A man barely alive. But, gentlemen, they *could* rebuild him. Ozzy, Sharon, Bob Daisley and Lee Kerslake recall his bionic recovery – and the hope, deceit and tragedy of *Blizzard…* and *Diary…*

Words: **Paul Elliott**

Summer, 1979. On the streets of West Hollywood the afternoon temperature is around 80 degrees. But there's no sunlight pouring into one particular room at Le Parc Hotel at 733 North West Knoll Drive. The curtains are drawn, as they had been for weeks on end. The air conditioning is on full blast, but a gas fire is also lit. The room reeks of cigarette smoke, booze and stale food, and is littered with empty beer cans and liquor bottles, crumpled clothes, overflowing ashtrays and pizza boxes. Amid the detritus, alone and in the darkness, sits Ozzy Osbourne, drunk, stoned, wired on cocaine, stupefied and shut off from the world.

For 10 years he had been the singer in Black Sabbath, one of the biggest rock acts in the world. But on April 27, 1979, while Sabbath were in rehearsals in Los Angeles, Ozzy was dismissed on the grounds that he was a drunkard and drug addict. "I was no more fucked up than the rest of them," Ozzy says now. "It was bullshit."

But the decision had been made. And at the age of 30, Ozzy thought he was finished.

It was Sabbath's manager, Don Arden, an infamous hard man nicknamed 'the Al Capone of pop', who sent Ozzy to Le Parc. And there the singer hid himself away, humiliated and depressed. With his wife Thelma and his two children back home in England, Ozzy attempted to numb his pain in the only way he knew how: with alcohol, cocaine, weed and a string of one-night stands. He opened his door only to drug dealers, for booze and pizza deliveries, or for a few well-informed groupies who had managed to track him down.

"I stayed in that room and got fucked up," he says. "I thought, Black Sabbath was a big thing, but it's over. So I'll have my last blast with the booze and dope, and fuck as many tarts as I can, and then go home. But I didn't fuck the tarts, because I was too pissed. And then one day Sharon came round."

Sharon Arden, Don's daughter, worked for her father's firm at their LA office. At 27 she had spent most of her adult life around rock bands. She'd first met Ozzy when she was just 18. Like her father, Sharon had a tough, no-nonsense approach to business. But when she visited Ozzy at Le Parc, she was shocked at his appearance, and at the squalor in which he was living.

"He looked awful," she says. "He hadn't shaved in weeks. His clothes were covered in food and he smelt terrible. It was heartbreaking to see somebody in such a state of hopelessness."

What Sharon Arden said to Ozzy that day would change his life; save him from himself. "Listen," she told him. "If you clean your act up we want to manage you." All that Ozzy could muster was a single word in reply: "Me?"

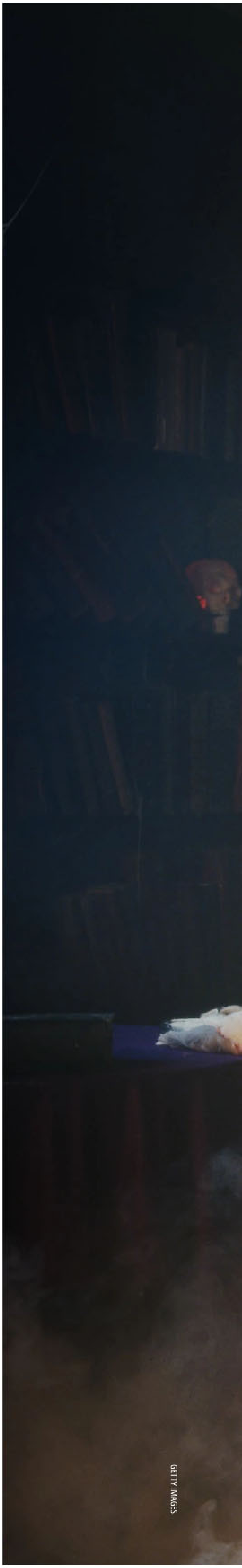
The resurrection of Ozzy Osbourne would be one of the most unlikely comebacks in rock history – and one of the most spectacular. He would rebuild his life and career with the help of Sharon Arden – his manager since 1980 and his wife since 1982 – and Randy Rhoads, the young American guitarist who illuminated the two albums that launched Ozzy's solo career: 1980's *Blizzard Of Ozz* and 1981's *Diary Of A Madman*. But while Ozzy's relationship with Sharon would endure, his partnership with Rhoads was all too brief, ended by a freak aeroplane crash that claimed the guitarist's life just five months after *Diary Of A Madman* was released.

"Randy was an awesome musician," Ozzy says. "And he was the sweetest, funniest guy. We loved each other. The day he died was the greatest tragedy of my life."

> **"HE LOOKED AWFUL. HIS CLOTHES WERE COVERED IN FOOD AND HE SMELT TERRIBLE."**
> **SHARON OSBOURNE**

It was just a few weeks after Sharon Arden spoke to Ozzy at Le Parc that he met Randy Rhoads for the first time. Under Sharon's instructions, Ozzy had begun auditioning musicians in LA, among them Gary Moore, who had recently left Thin Lizzy. "It never worked out," Ozzy says. "Gary was always hot and cold."

Among the various LA-based guitarists who later auditioned, Rhoads was the only candidate who impressed, although on first sight the singer was distinctly underwhelmed. Lying on a sofa in a rehearsal room, a stoned Ozzy viewed Rhoads through one eye and thought: "What the fuck is this?" Recalling the young guitarist's tiny stature and delicate features, Ozzy says: "He looked like a girl! He was about four-foot-two and weighed about 100 pounds wet." But when Rhoads plugged in and played, Ozzy couldn't believe what he was hearing. "I was thinking, either this is incredible gear that I'm on, or this guy is something else!"



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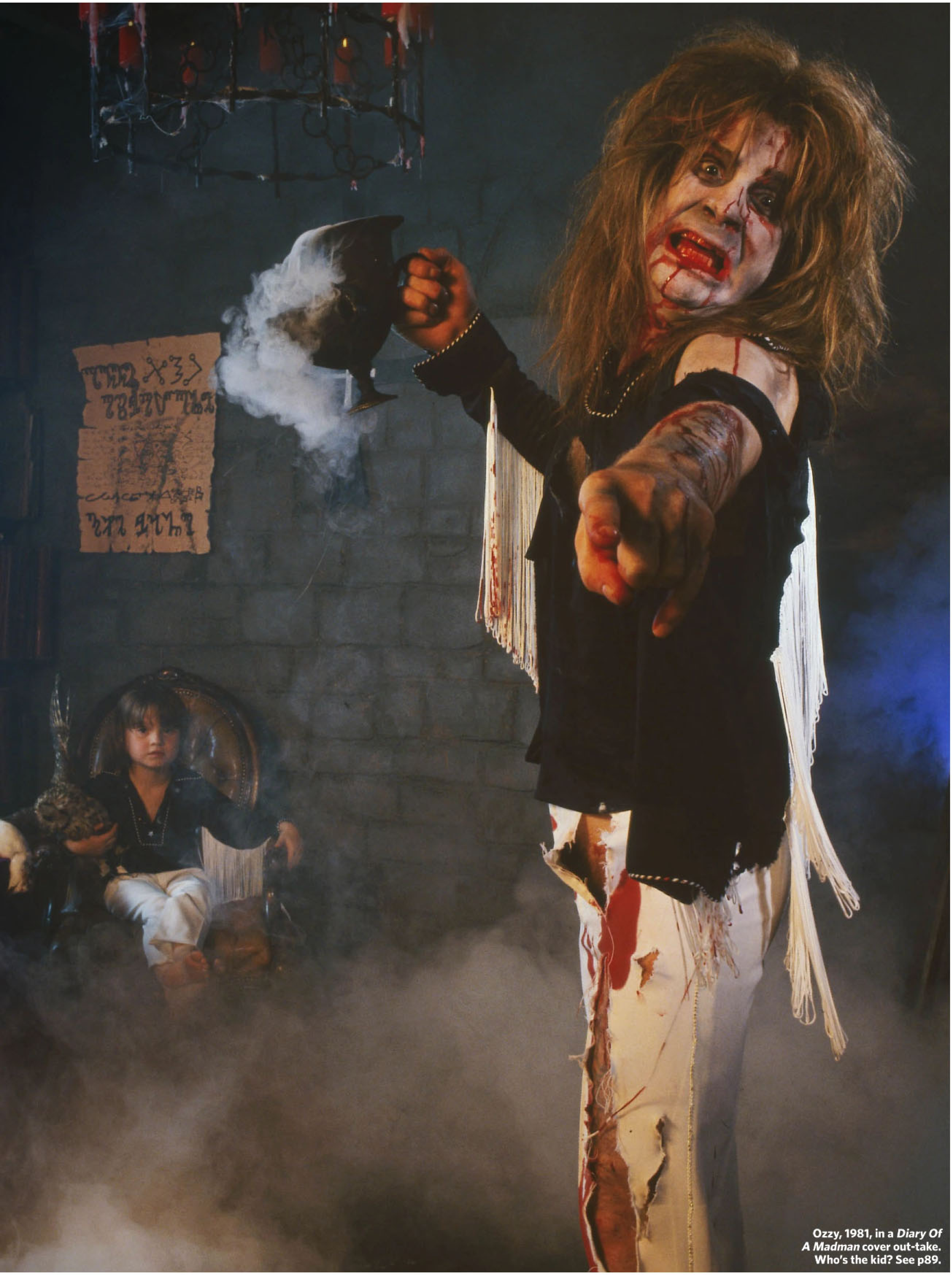

Ozzy, 1981, in a *Diary Of A Madman* cover out-take. Who's the kid? See p89.

Rhoads and Ozzy were polar opposites. Eight years younger, Randy was a classically trained musician who still lived at his mother's house. He was softly spoken and rarely drank alcohol. But, as Ozzy says: "We just hit it off. It was like The Odd Couple. Randy hardly ever drank – he'd have this weird shit called a Golden Cadillac [a cocktail of Galliano, white crème de cacao and cream], and get all giggly when he'd had a few. But when it came to music, we just clicked. With Black Sabbath they'd just come up with the riff, and if I couldn't beat the riff I'd have to sing with it. Randy was the first guitar player to really help me, instead of just saying: 'Put a vocal over that.' He was a very patient man."

Rhoads was still officially a member of LA rock band Quiet Riot, so initial rehearsals with Ozzy were conducted in secrecy in LA, assisted by drummer Frankie Banali and bassist Dana Strum.

Shortly afterwards, Ozzy returned to his family in the UK – his relationship with Sharon was still purely professional at this stage. And it was in September 1979, on a night out at the Music Machine club in London, that Ozzy befriended Bob Daisley. Aged 30, the easy-going Australian had recently been the bassist in Rainbow. He would prove to be a hugely important ally for Ozzy.

At first Daisley was cautious. "Ozzy had been fired by Black Sabbath for being out of his mind," he says. "He didn't have a lot of credibility." But after rehearsals at Ozzy's house in Stafford, Daisley agreed to work with Ozzy on his new album. And in November, at the London offices of Don Arden's Jet Records, Daisley was introduced to the guitarist who'd just flown in from LA. "Randy wore very fitted clothes, his hair was perfect and his nails were long and manicured… I wondered, is this guy gay?" Daisley laughs. "But I realised after a short time that he wasn't." After their first rehearsal together, he also realised that Rhoads was a genuine talent.

Mr Growly: Ozzy pops out for a spot of lunch in New York, 1980.

> **"OZZY SAID HIS VOICE COULDN'T HANDLE TWO GIGS IN ONE DAY. SO WE BACKED HIM UP – AND THEN SHARON BLAMED *US!*"**
>
> **BOB DAISLEY**

The three began writing for the album, and auditioning drummers, at two studios: Rockfield in Wales, and Transam Trucking in Suffolk. By Daisley's reckoning, it was he and Rhoads who wrote the bulk of the music. "The main riffs came from Randy," he says. "Then he and I would work those riffs into songs. But Ozzy did have his input. His vocal melodies were always good and always important." Daisley also wrote, in his estimation, "98 per cent of the lyrics", just as Black Sabbath's bassist Geezer Butler had written the words to Sabbath's songs. "Ozzy was not a lyricist," Daisley says. "But a couple of the song titles were his." The title of the album was also Ozzy's: the cocaine-referencing pun *Blizzard Of Ozz*.

Writing progressed quickly, even if Ozzy was often too drunk to contribute much of any value. "Sometimes he'd start drinking by late morning," Daisley says, "and then he'd sleep all afternoon."

The search for a drummer, however, proved frustrating, until Don Arden's son, David, who was overseeing the project while Sharon remained in LA, brought in Lee Kerslake, a burly, bearded, 32-year-old former member of Uriah Heep.

"I counted in, 'One, two, three…' hit the drums, and Randy Rhoads jumped two feet in the air, shouting: 'We got it!'" Kerslake says of his audition, at Shepperton Studios in Middlesex. "It was magic. Uncanny." Daisley agreed. "Lee played with fire and aggression," he says. "That was the guy we'd been looking for."

With his audition passed, Kerslake shook hands with Ozzy. The drummer recalls Ozzy saying to him: "Here's my hand, here's my heart. This band will never part."

Going under: Ozzy with Randy Rhoads in Florida...

...and with manager/ future wife Sharon Arden, Bradford, '80.

The band began recording *Blizzard Of Ozz* on March 22, 1980 at Ridge Farm Studios in rural Surrey, a residential facility based around a 17th-century farmhouse. "It was kind of like a dysfunctional rock'n'roll work camp," Ozzy says. The initial producer, Chris Tsangarides, was relieved of his duties after a week, and the four band members would co-produce the album, with Ridge Farm staffer Max Norman as engineer, recording in the converted barn that served as the main studio. "That room had a fabulous ambience," Kerslake says. "You could feel the music coming alive."

The album was completed in four weeks. By his own admission, Ozzy spent much of that time in a nearby pub, The Plough, which was owned by the studio. "We would lay a track down in the morning," he recalls, "and the moment we'd get a track done I'd go for a drink. If it wasn't for closing hours the album would never have been fucking done."

Ozzy nicknamed Bob Daisley 'Sid Serious', because Daisley was so focused on the task in hand, but it wasn't only Ozzy who was drinking and doing drugs. "It was a fun time," Daisley says. "We'd all do a little bit, apart from Randy, who didn't do drugs. But Ozzy… he tended to overdo it."

Witnessing the singer's self-destructive binges, Daisley was inspired to write the lyrics to what became one of the album's most famous songs,

ROSS HALFIN x3

"This band will never part..." Bob Daisley, Ozzy and Randy Rhoads, Ridge Farm studios, 1981.

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Suicide Solution. Ozzy wrote the opening line – *'Wine is fine but whisky's quicker'* – after Ogden Nash's *'Candy is dandy but liquor is quicker'* – and claims it was about AC/DC singer Bon Scott (who had died of acute alcohol poisoning on February 19, 1980). But Daisley says: "Bon Scott was a mate of mine, and he happened to die around about that time, but the lyrics were about Ozzy, because he was always getting out of it." This much, Ozzy does not deny. "I was going the same way as Bon Scott," he admits.

But what Ozzy delivered on *Blizzard Of Ozz* was astonishing: a performance of complete authority that redefined his entire career. If Ozzy had felt like a has-been following his dismissal from Black Sabbath, he sounded reborn on *Blizzard Of Ozz*. It was a heavy metal album, but one quite unlike anything he had recorded with Sabbath. With Rhoads the most exciting guitarist since Eddie Van Halen, Ozzy had found a new sound for the new decade – illustrated most powerfully by the new album's lead single, *Crazy Train*, a modern, hard rock anthem driven by a high-octane Rhoads riff, with Ozzy gleefully playing up to his loony-tunes image.

Blizzard Of Ozz was full of great songs: *I Don't Know*, the heavy-hitting opener; *Goodbye To Romance*, a broken-hearted ballad; and *Mr Crowley*, a study of infamous occultist Aleister Crowley, with a suitably doomy keyboard intro by Rainbow's Don Airey. The album was released in the UK on Jet Records on September 20, 1980 (it was released in the US the following year). It was a Top 10 hit, and was accompanied by a sell-out tour – proof that Ozzy was not, as he'd feared, a has-been.

But on the eve of the tour, when Sharon Arden observed the band's rehearsals in her new role as Ozzy's manager, she sensed that something was not right. "I wasn't responsible for bringing Daisley and Kerslake in," she says. "And I didn't like what I saw. Not that they weren't good musicians, but visually it was all off." To her mind, Daisley, at 30, and Kerslake, 33, were too old and too old-school.

Daisley claims that during that UK tour, Ozzy and Sharon repeatedly said to him: "Let's get rid of Lee." He says they had a replacement already lined up: Mississippi-born Tommy Aldridge. "I would never agree to it," Daisley insists. "I said: 'Tommy's a great drummer, but Lee's perfect for the band.'"

But on October 31, 1980, when the tour finished with a date at Brighton Dome, Aldridge was there as Sharon's guest. At the time, Kerslake thought nothing of it, but as he says now: "I should have twigged what was happening."

What was also happening was an affair between Ozzy and Sharon that would lead to the break-up of the singer's marriage. The pair first became romantically involved in August 1980, and while Thelma was unaware of it the affair was common knowledge among Ozzy's inner circle. "Ozzy was going through all this personal turmoil," says Daisley. "He'd started this thing with Sharon and he was going back and forth to Thelma in Stafford."

With the US release of *Blizzard Of Ozz* still pending, Sharon put the band back to work on a second album. Songs were written in late 1980 at Jumbo Studios in North London, but Ozzy was not always present as he made frequent trips to see Thelma and the kids. It was a familiar pattern, with the band accustomed to working in Ozzy's absence.

As Bob Daisley recollects, it was also at this time that Ozzy's band threatened a kind of mutiny. According to Daisley, it had been agreed by all parties that half of all monies would go to Ozzy, with the other half split between Daisley, Kerslake and Rhoads. "Ozzy was the guy that landed the deal with Jet Records," Daisley says. "So that was the agreement. But as we were writing the second album, we still hadn't had the contracts signed. So we said, fuck this. Randy, Lee and I downed tools." Daisley says that Don Arden persuaded them to continue writing new material, promising that the contracts would be finalised as quickly as possible.

On February 9, 1981 Ozzy and his band returned to Ridge Farm to record *Diary Of A Madman*. Teamed once more with Max Norman, who would get a co-producer's credit on this album, they worked for six weeks in total. The result was a record as good, perhaps even better, than *Blizzard Of Ozz*. The title track was its artistic peak: a bizarre gothic masterpiece incorporating choir and orchestration, inspired by Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. "At first, Ozzy didn't get it," the bassist chuckles. "It's not your standard 4/4 rock thing – it's got weird timings – and Ozzy didn't know where to sing or what to sing. He said: 'Who the fuck do you think I am, Frank Zappa?'"

Ozzy's relationship with Sharon was intensifying. During the recording, she was a regular visitor to Ridge Farm, where she stayed overnight with the singer in a chalet at the studio. By the end of the year, Thelma Osbourne would file for divorce.

The band left Ridge Farm on March 23, four weeks before the start of a US tour, while *Diary Of A Madman* was being mixed. A few days later, Lee Kerslake phoned his wife at their villa in Lanzarote. He was about to fly to the island for a short break ahead of the tour. Kerslake's wife told him to sit down. "You're out," she said. "Ozzy's got rid of you and Bob. You're not going to America." It was, Kerslake says, "one hell of a bombshell".

Ozzy and Sharon give different accounts of their reasons for firing Kerslake and Daisley. "I had some fucking great times with Lee and Bob," Ozzy says. "We were a team. But when the success came they were like, 'my idea is better than your idea'. And I thought, this can't work." Sharon likens the pair to union shop stewards, continually haggling over money. "Lee and Bob were too small-time for us," she says. "They'd take the food home from the dressing room in Tupperware boxes so they wouldn't have to buy themselves dinner. They were a big pain in the ass."

➜

Bob Daisley describes these allegations as "ridiculous". He believes that he and Kerslake were fired because they had dared to challenge Sharon's authority. "Sharon told Ozzy that some of the US promoters wanted to do two shows in one day," Daisley says. "Ozzy said to us: 'Fellas, you've gotta back me up – my voice won't handle it'. He knew his limitations. We said to Sharon: 'Look, Ozzy's voice isn't gonna hold out.' And then Sharon blamed us! She said we were the ones who wouldn't do two shows a day. It was absolute bollocks. We were backing up Ozzy because he asked us to!"

Both men felt betrayed. Kerslake also claims that after he and Daisley were fired, Randy Rhoads threatened to quit in protest. "Randy said to me: 'I'll leave if you want me to. I don't wanna stay in this without you two.' That's how close we were. I said: 'Randy, this is gonna go through the roof – these two albums are gonna sell millions, trust me. Stay with it, mate – and good luck to you.' I wish I hadn't said that now. He'd still be alive."

When Ozzy's US tour kicked off at the Towson Center in Maryland on April 22, it was with a new band: Randy, Tommy Aldridge, keyboard player Don Airey, and Cuban bassist Rudy Sarzo, another ex-member of Quiet Riot. One month later, *Blizzard Of Ozz* entered the US chart. It would peak at No.21.

The support act on the tour was Motörhead, whose leader, Lemmy, had an appetite for drink and drugs to match even Ozzy's. After one particularly heavy night on what Ozzy refers to as "the chemistry set", he and Lemmy met the following morning and were shocked at the sight of each other. "I'd been doing cocaine and booze all night," Ozzy recalls. "I felt like somebody had scraped me off a gorilla's arsehole. And there was Lemmy, sheet-white, looking like he's just come out of a fucking silent horror film. And he looks at me and says: 'Fucking hell, I hope I don't look as bad as you!' If Lemmy Kilmister's saying that to me, I must be fucking bad."

During the tour, Sharon attempted to control Ozzy's drug intake by firing any member of the road crew that was caught supplying him. "Everybody wants to be his pal," she says. "Everybody wants to have an Ozzy story." But if Ozzy was still able to get drugs, and was still, in his words, "the king fucking drunk", the tour progressed smoothly through 87 shows, including a six-week run with Def Leppard opening.

When *Diary Of A Madman* was released on November 7, 1981, Bob Daisley and Lee Kerslake were shocked when they saw the finished album: Tommy Aldridge and Rudy Sarzo were credited as drummer and bassist; production was credited to Ozzy, Randy and Max Norman. "We were all hands-on with the production," Daisley says, "but Lee and I didn't get credited for anything. We'd been written out of history."

The second album would reach No.14 in the UK and No.16 in the US. A British tour in December was cancelled after two shows, with Ozzy citing exhaustion. But at the end of that month another US tour began in San Francisco: a tour that would lead Ozzy into a storm of controversy and then into utter despair.

Back in April 1981, Ozzy had caused widespread public outrage when – drunk, as usual – he bit the head of a live dove at a record company meet-and-greet to launch *Blizzard Of Ozz*. On January 20, 1982, three weeks into the US tour, he did something oddly similar. During a concert at the Veterans Auditorium in Des Moines, Iowa, a fan threw a bat on to the stage, and Ozzy, thinking it was a toy, and cheered on by the audience, bit its head off. He promptly realised it was not a toy when the head "twitched" in his mouth. He was later rushed to a nearby hospital for rabies shots.

An even greater controversy followed later in the tour when on February 19, when Ozzy, drunk yet again, was arrested in San Antonio, Texas for urinating against a wall at The Alamo, a sacred American monument.

"Ozzy was really getting out of control," Sharon says. It was during this period that Randy Rhoads tried to shock Ozzy into seeing sense. "You're gonna drink yourself to death," the guitarist said. "It was kind of ironic," Ozzy says now. "Poor Randy died not too long after that."

On March 19, 1982, the band were en route to Orlando for a festival show when their tour bus driver, Andrew Aycock, made an unscheduled stop in Leesburg, Florida, where he owned a home adjacent to an airstrip. Most of the people on the bus, including Ozzy and Sharon, remained asleep. But a few were awake, among them Randy, Don Airey and Rachel Youngblood, a seamstress and assistant to Sharon. Aycock, a licensed pilot, offered them joyrides in a light aircraft. Randy, who had a fear of flying, declined at first. But after Aycock had taken Airey for a spin, Randy and Rachel boarded the plane. Witnesses reported that it twice flew low over the tour bus, buzzing it, before a third pass resulted in disaster when the left wing clipped the back of the bus and the plane crashed into the garage of a nearby house.

Ozzy woke in terror. "There was an almighty bang," he says. "The bus was shaking. I thought, the fucking guy's hit something on the freeway. And I could smell fuel. I grabbed Sharon and we got out. I didn't know what the fuck was going on. I was in the middle of this fucking field, in my underpants. And then I saw this blazing inferno."

She's the boss: Ozzy and Sharon.

Tour manager Jake Duncan was standing beside Ozzy in mute shock. Ozzy screamed: "Where the fuck is Randy?!" Duncan pointed to the garage, as flames and smoke engulfed it. When Don Airey rushed past carrying a fire extinguisher, Ozzy shook his head and said: "Forget it."

It was later reported that the bodies of Rhoads, Youngblood and Aycock were identified only by dental records and jewellery; also, that Aycock had traces of cocaine in his blood.

When news of Randy's death reached Lee Kerslake in England, he was devastated. "That ripped me to pieces," he sighs. "I cried for three days."

Ozzy, meanwhile, remained too traumatised to grieve fully. "You can't explain how you feel," he says. "In a way, you don't feel. You just shut down."

Sharon was mourning the loss of two dear friends – she refers to Rachel Youngblood as "the mother I never had and always wanted" – but she was also determined that the tour, and Ozzy, must move on – and quickly. "Ozzy was saying: 'I've lost everything. I'm just gonna fuck off home'," she recalls. "And I'm like: 'You can't. You've got a whole tour sold out. You're gonna do it. And it wasn't that old bollocks about, you know, Randy would have wanted you to do it, we just had to carry on. I said to Ozzy: 'If you keep going, we will find the right person along the way.' But it was hard. Very fucking hard."

Live at last: Ozzy, Rudy Sarzo, Tommy Aldridge and Randy Rhoads at the New York Palladium.

The day after Randy's death, a subdued Ozzy Osbourne was back on stage at Orlando's Tangerine Bowl with former Gillan guitarist Bernie Tormé standing in as temporary replacement for Rhoads. Sharon made calls to other high-profile guitar players. "Michael Schenker wanted too much money," she says. "And when I asked Gary Moore to do me a favour he told me to fuck off." After three weeks, Tormé departed at his own request, and Night Ranger's Brad Gillis joined the band for the remainder of the tour.

"There was a chain of events," Ozzy reflects. "My father died. My band Black Sabbath fired me. My wife put in for a divorce. My new band starts up and my guitar player gets killed. I remember saying to Sharon: 'You know, I can't take this fucking merry-go-round any more. It's over.' And she went: 'No it fucking isn't!' If she hadn't said that, I'd still be in that fucking field, staring at a burned-out house."

GETTY

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS FIELD IN MY PANTS. AND THEN I SAW THIS BLAZING INFERNO."

OZZY OSBOURNE

It's no secret that, in the weeks prior to his death, Randy Rhoads was planning to leave Ozzy's band. As a student of classical music, he wanted to broaden his range as a musician. Ozzy remembers Rhoads speaking about this the night before he died, during the bus ride from Tennessee to Florida. "He said he didn't want to do rock'n'roll any more," Ozzy recalls. "He wanted to go off and study classical stuff. I said: 'Hang about! We're just fucking breaking big now. The way we're going you'll be able to buy your own fucking university!' After that I hit the sack. It was about 5.30 in the morning, and I'd been on the gin all night." It was the last conversation they had.

There is, however, a different version of events, as told to Bob Daisley by two people who claim to have seen Ozzy punch Randy in the face when Randy said he was quitting. Daisley, for one, believes this to be true. "Randy wanted to go to Europe to get his degree in classical music," he says. "But there was this contractual obligation with Don Arden, who wanted Ozzy to do a live album of Sabbath material. Randy did not want to do it. But he agreed to do it if he could get out of his contract and fuck off." According to Daisley's sources, this led to a confrontation between Ozzy and Randy just two weeks before Randy was killed. Daisley recounts: "Ozzy called him an ungrateful little shit and whacked him."

Sharon Osbourne has also heard this story. "Ozzy would never, ever have done that to Randy," she says. "Some people would like to believe that Ozzy would have been so distraught about Randy leaving that he would have punched him. But I spoke to Randy's mum about this. The first person Randy would have told would have been his mum. And when I told her that story she was mortified. It's just not true."

But, as Ozzy acknowledges, there have always been rumours about Randy Rhoads. "People say if Randy had have lived he'd have gone back to Quiet Riot," Ozzy says. "I just wish he had been around to go back to Quiet Riot."

As Sharon says: "There are always three sides to any story: what you said, what they said, and the truth." And in the story of *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman* – in the testimonies of Ozzy and Sharon, and Bob Daisley and Lee Kerslake – the truth is entirely subjective.

In 1983, less than a year after Sharon fired him, Daisley worked on Ozzy's album *Bark At The Moon*. It resulted, Daisley says, from Sharon assisting him and Kerslake in a lawsuit against her father Don Arden and Jet Records. Daisley would also play bass on Ozzy's 1991 album *No More Tears*. But in 1997 he and Kerslake would sue the Osbournes for alleged non-payment of performance royalties. Sharon responded by having both *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman* remixed in 2002, with Daisley and Kerslake's contributions replaced with new recordings from Ozzy's then-rhythm section bassist Robert Trujillo and drummer Mike Bordin.

Only now, with the 2011 reissues of the albums have the original versions been restored. "I'm glad about that," Ozzy says. "I don't give a fuck if you've got Jesus Christ and Moses playing bass and drums, it ain't the same."

This, at least, is something that they can all agree on. As Kerslake says: "We were all friends, and that's what's so sad about what happened. But those albums we made are outstanding."

For Bob Daisley, *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman* represented the fulfilment of a long-held ambition. "I'd always wanted to create some music that became a real part of rock history," he says.

For Ozzy, those two albums were perhaps the most important that he ever made: the basis for his resurrection from has-been to hero. He can still recall the dark days of 1979 in that stinking room at Le Parc: "After Black Sabbath fired me I didn't know if I was gonna sell a fucking bottle top again. But there was a magic that happened with Randy and Bob and Lee, and that's so rare."

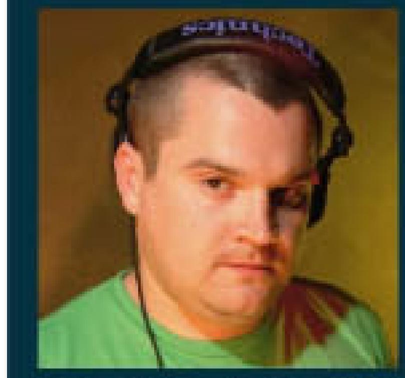
Above all, he says, *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman* stand as testament to the brilliance of Randy Rhoads, the young guitarist who did so much to turn Ozzy's life around.

"It's only when people die at a young age, like Randy, and Hendrix before him, that people put this mystique around them," Ozzy says. "But there was no mystique about Randy Rhoads. He was just a fucking incredible guitar player and a lovely guy. We really were made for each other." ❶

ROSS HALFIN x2, GETTY IMAGES

"I'M NOT INTO METAL"

Who's the kid on the *Diary Of A Madman* sleeve? That'll be Ozzy's son, Louis.



Louis Osbourne: "I was very young – five or six. This was before my mum and dad split up and my dad married Sharon. My mum made the matching suits that we're both wearing. I mainly remember my dad being covered in blood, which I actually thought was very entertaining. I used to watch horror films with my dad around that time, so that kind of thing didn't scare me at all. I remember me and my dad watched John Carpenter's *The Thing*. My dad was shitting himself – I just thought it was funny.

"It's funny, because I've never really been into the metal scene. Dance music gripped me and that's what I chose to pursue. Now, I DJ all over the world – underground house and techno. I record as Osbourne & Anderson, and I have a label called Mija Recordings. People say: 'Why don't you do some mash-ups of your dad's stuff,' but I'm just not interested.

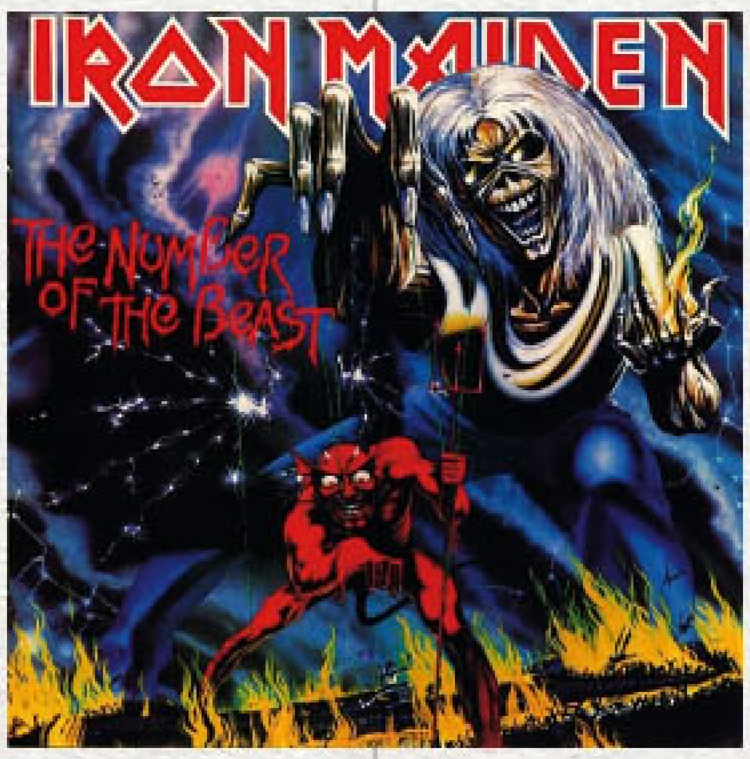
"To be honest, I'm much more of a Sabbath fan than I am of my dad's own material. The sad thing is I probably couldn't even tell you the tracklisting of *Diary Of A Madman*. Is *Flying High Again* on there? Well, there you go, I'm not that bad."

'WOE TO YOU, OH EARTH AND SEA
FOR THE DEVIL SENDS THE BEAST WITH WRATH
BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT TIME IS SHORT.
LET HIM WHO HATH UNDERSTANDING
RECKON THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST
FOR IT IS A HUMAN NUMBER.
ITS NUMBER IS...
SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIX'

Before *The Number Of The Beast*, **Iron Maiden** were just part of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. After it they were a worldwide major band. But sacking their 'problem' singer wasn't the only price they had to pay for its success.

Words: **Paul Brannigan** Portrait: **Ross Halfin**

In the summer of 1981, Iron Maiden took the decision to fire singer Paul Di'Anno. It was a bold move. The brash, cocksure, 23-year-old East Londoner was a hero to the headbangers, earthdogs, hell rats and rivet-heads whose fanatical support had propelled Maiden to the forefront of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. His expulsion from the band not only marked the end of an era, but also was viewed with a certain amount of unease by long-term supporters. There was genuine concern that, having failed to match the Top 10 success of 1980's self-titled debut album with the more considered follow-up, *Killers*, Maiden were now thinking about a stylistic makeover more attuned to the lucrative, but notoriously fickle, American rock market.


IRON MAIDEN
The Number of the Beast

In December 1981, when the freshly minted *Kerrang!* magazine published its first Readers' Poll, Maiden were conspicuous by their absence in the Best Band category. The slight didn't escape the attention of bassist and founder Steve Harris, but he had more pressing matters to focus on. At the time, Maiden were holed up in an East London rehearsal studio with a new singer, 23-year-old Bruce Dickinson, but as yet no new songs for their crucial third album. The pressure was on the young band as never before. But with their backs to the wall, Maiden responded magnificently. Just four months later they emerged with *The Number Of The Beast*, a record that not only redefined their own career, but also served as a benchmark for every heavy metal album that has followed over the past 30 years.

Steve Harris: We knew that it was a big deal to change our singer, but we also knew that we couldn't carry on with Paul. When he first got involved with the band, Rod [Smallwood, manager] asked me was there any potential problems that might crop up in the future that he should know about. And I said: "I've got to be honest. There may be a problem with Paul, because sometimes his attitude is a bit weird."

Paul Di'Anno: By the time of *Killers* the band was getting a bit more technical. I didn't think the songs had the same attack, and I started losing interest. I felt that I might be letting people down by voicing my doubts, so I said nothing. But then it built up to the point where I was rubbing Steve up the wrong way.

Taking it in his stride: Bruce Dickinson's arrival in Maiden was a key element in their early success.

Celebrating Bruce signing his Maiden contract: (clockwise from top left) Adrian Smith, Steve Harris, Dave Murray, Bruce Dickinson and Clive Burr.

Steve Harris: I always thought as the band gets more successful maybe he'll be more into it. But, if anything, the bigger we got, the worse he got.

Rod Smallwood: Paul started to get a bit into the whole 'lifestyle' aspect of being a rock star. And I was like, well you better fucking control it, I'm gonna be watching you. I knew the only thing that could fuck up Maiden was themselves. But Paul was so over-the-top. He started having vocal problems, he smoked like a chimney, he drank brandy, now he's doing a bit of coke and speed too, and he was missing gigs."

Steve Harris: I'm not into drugs myself, never have been. But I'm not against other people doing what they like – as long as it don't fuck up their gig. Well, Paul was letting it fuck up his gig.

Paul Di'Anno: When you're fucked up on drugs and alcohol you turn into a complete prick. But I did feel relief when I played that last gig.

Iron Maiden's final gig with Di'Anno took place at Odd Fellows Mansion in Copenhagen, Denmark on September 10, 1981. Future Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich was among those in the audience to see him take his final bow. But Steve Harris was already searching for a new singer weeks before Di'Anno was shown the door. Former Back Street Crawler frontman Terry Slesser was auditioned behind Di'Anno's back, but his whisky-soaked rasp didn't gel with Maiden's more technical material. Harris turned his attention to the flashy, flamboyantly dressed frontman with Maiden's NWOBHM peers Samson, Worksop-born Bruce Dickinson, aka Bruce Bruce.

Bruce Dickinson: Samson only played a few gigs with Maiden on the same bill, but I was acutely aware that they had a big following. I checked them out when Samson were headlining above them at a venue called the Music Machine. I got goosebumps watching them. It gave me the same feeling I got as a kid listening to *Deep Purple In Rock*. I remember thinking, wow, this is like Purple for the 80s. I was looking at Paul, thinking I should be up there.

Steve Harris: I'd never been much into Samson, but I'd always thought their singer was good. I thought, yeah, the bloke's got a really good voice and he knows how to work a crowd. I thought he sounded a bit like Ian Gillan, actually. When the shit really hit the fan with Paul, he was one of the first people I thought of. Rod wasn't keen.

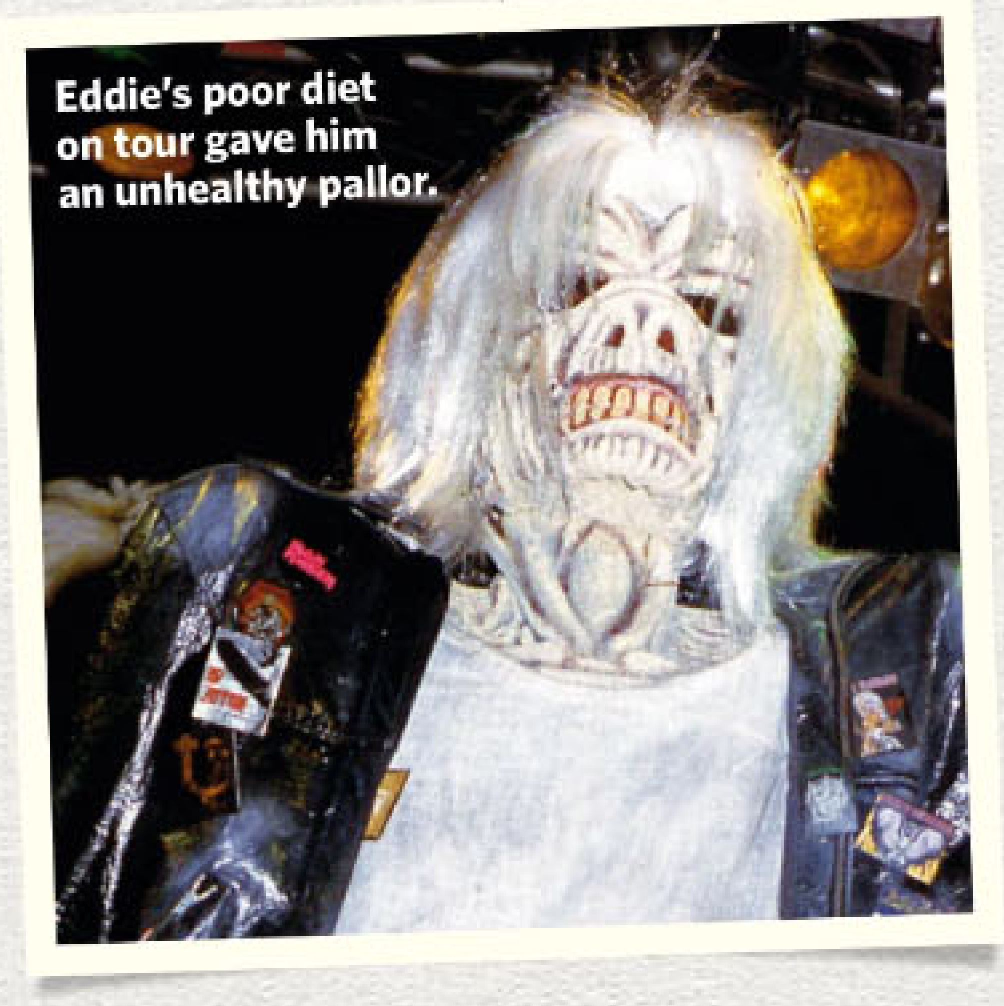
Rod Smallwood: I hadn't even met Bruce, but I didn't really like him. I thought Bruce Bruce was a stupid name, I thought the white thing he used to wear on stage looked really naff, and also Samson had messed about with Maiden before I got involved; I do bear grudges.

Steve Harris: I didn't care, I just thought the geezer had a great voice. So I said, stuff that, I want him. And so we arranged to go to Reading to have a look and see if he was interested.

Bruce Dickinson: Rod talked to me at Reading Festival and said he'd like me to try out. The first words out of my mouth were: "Well when I get the job, which I will, don't expect that it'll be the same as with the guy you've got at the moment." I thought it was probably best to go in there with all guns blazing.

Bruce Dickinson was officially unveiled as Iron Maiden's new frontman on stage at the Palasport arena in Bologna, Italy on October 26, 1981. Following a nerve-racking UK debut for the frontman at the Rainbow theatre in London the following month, the band decamped to East London to write their third album. With studio time booked at Battery Studios in north-west London in December, the clock was ticking.

Steve Harris: There was a lot of pressure. Not only did we have a new singer, we had no material. The first album was like a 'best of' of the songs we'd been playing during the first four years of the band. The second album was mainly early stuff as well, apart from maybe four songs. When we got to the third album we had nothing. We had to write *…Beast* from scratch. Pressure helps to make



Eddie's poor diet on tour gave him an unhealthy pallor.

ROSS HALFIN; ICONICPIX; GETTY

"I HADN'T EVEN MET BRUCE, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY LIKE HIM. I THOUGHT BRUCE BRUCE WAS A STUPID NAME."
MANAGER ROD SMALLWOOD

you come up with the goods. But you have to go through hell to get there.

Adrian Smith (guitarist): I remember going around to Steve's place – I think he still lived with his gran at the time – and he was playing me the idea for *Number Of The Beast*. I thought: "Wow. That's amazing. That's really different."

Martin Birch (producer): When Bruce joined, it opened up the possibilities for the new album tremendously. I simply didn't think Paul was capable of handling vocals on some of the quite complicated directions I knew Steve wanted to explore.

Bruce Dickinson: It was quite good, in that way, because I wasn't going to be asked to sing words that had already been written by Paul, or songs Steve had written with him in mind. It was all fresh.

Adrian Smith: I was pretty shy about showing the band my songs. It's painful to sit in front of your bandmates and go: "This is my idea", and have them just stare at you. But I thought that if I wanted to stay in the band I'd get pretty frustrated if I didn't contribute ideas. And, fortunately, with *The Prisoner* Steve liked what he heard.

Bruce Dickinson: *The Prisoner* started off in the rehearsal room. Our drummer [Clive Burr] wasn't there, he was out having a cup of tea, so being a frustrated drummer I started bashing out this simple drum beat at the beginning, and then Adrian started playing this riff. Harry came in and went: "Wow, what a great riff!" And then we just started.

Adrian Smith: And *22 Acacia Avenue* was something I came up with when I was very young, one of those first songs you write. I had this band, Urchin, and we did this song, *22*. We were getting stuff ready for *Number Of The Beast*, and out of the blue Steve turned to me and said: "What was that song you used to do in Urchin?" and he started humming it. And it was *22*. It ended up being on the record.

Bruce Dickinson: I still had a legal sword of Damocles hanging over my head from the Samson contract which meant that I wasn't allowed to actually write, which was extremely frustrating, but still, the atmosphere was great.

Martin Birch: I had the same feeling on *Number Of The Beast* as when we did the Deep Purple album *Machine Head*. It was the same kind of atmosphere, the same kind of feeling, like, something really good is happening here.

Bruce Dickinson: Martin was like a guru to me and everyone in Maiden at the time. The whole thing was just a lads' night out. We had a bloody great time.

Martin Birch: I remember we spent ages getting the vocal intro to the title track right. We did it over and over and over until Bruce said: "My head is splitting. Can't we move on and do something else and come back to this?" But I wouldn't let him do anything else until he'd got it perfect. It drove him crazy.

Bruce Dickinson: I got pissed off to the extent that I was trashing the room. When the tape was on, Martin asked me if I could do the scream at the end of the first verse. I was like, "Oh, willingly".

Steve Harris: The idea was to get a blood-curdling scream like the one on *Won't Get Fooled Again*. It worked quite well.

Martin Birch: On the Sunday we were working on the track *Number Of The Beast*, it was a rainy night and I hit this van. I looked in the back of the van and it's got about half-a-dozen nuns in the back. And then this guy starts praying to me. A couple of days later I took my Range Rover in to be repaired, and when they give me the bill it was 666 pounds.

Steve Harris: People don't believe this, but he changed it to 667.

Martin Birch: I remember saying to them when it was finished: "This is gonna be a big, big album. This is gonna transform your career." It just had all the magical ingredients: feel, ideas, energy, execution. And I think the response I got was: "Oh, really?"

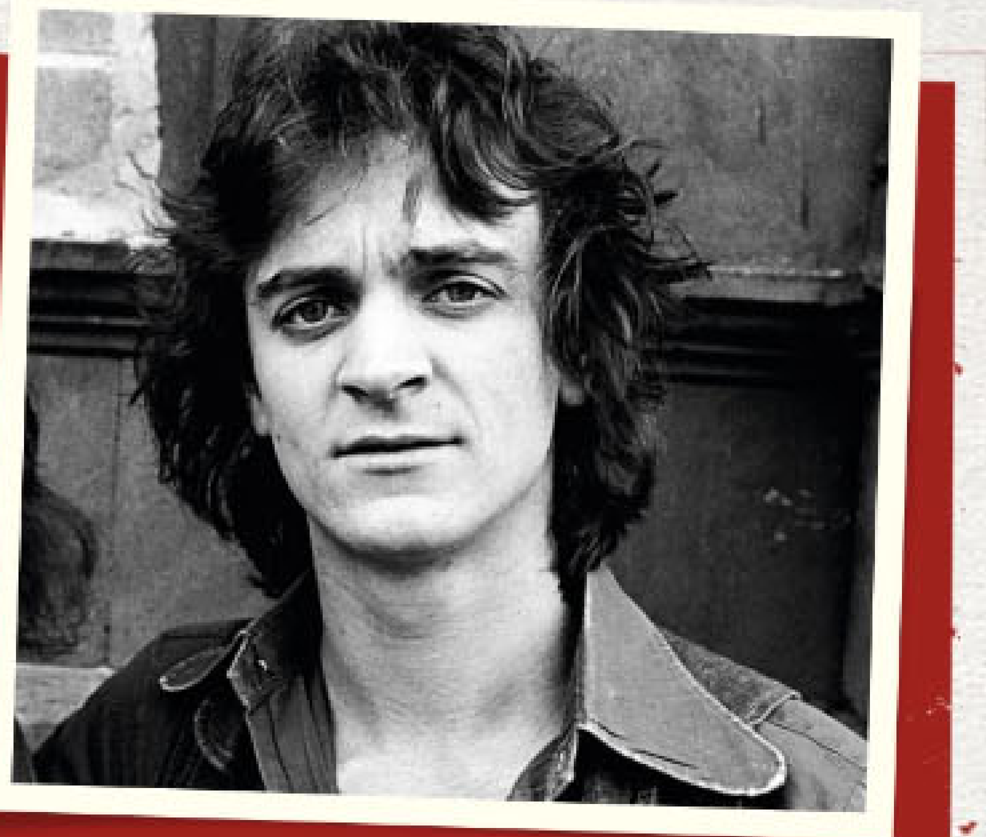
The first teaser for Maiden's third album was the galloping, Wild West-themed single *Run To The Hills*. Released on February 2, 1982, before work on its parent album was complete, it became Maiden's first Top 10 single, entering the UK chart at No.7. Proudly out of step with the rest of their chart peers, Maiden were considered a novelty by the media; appearances on *Top Of The Pops* and anarchic Saturday morning children's TV show *Tiswas* followed, raising the band's profile considerably. The exposure paid off. Released on March 29, *The Number Of The Beast* debuted in the UK album chart at No.1.

Steve Harris: *Run To The Hills* was written in that rehearsal room too. I came up with some riffs and we worked it out there and then. It was very spontaneous. It came out fantastic.

Bruce Dickinson: We were on tour in Winterthur, Switzerland when we got the news about the album. We got a telegram on the Sunday morning going: "Your album is number one!" And we went: "Fantastic!" But at the time, we were pushing a 30-seat coach to jump start it, because the driver had let the battery go flat.

Steve Harris: We knew that we'd made a strong album, but sometimes that's not enough. For it go like that, with Top 10 singles and number one album, was incredible.

The Beast On The Road tour kicked off on February 25, 1982 at Queensway Hall in Dunstable. It ran for 10 months, racking up a total of 182 shows. And it was on the road that the first tensions between no-nonsense bandleader Harris and his cocky, mouthy, public school-educated new singer began to surface.



BRUCE WHO?!

What would Maiden have sounded like if they hadn't brought in Mr Dickinson?

Bruce Dickinson wasn't Steve Harris's first choice to replace Paul Di'Anno when Iron Maiden's sacked their original singer in 1981. Before approaching Dickinson, Harris asked Terry Slesser, formerly the singer with prog band Beckett and Paul Kossoff's Back Street Crawler, to try out.

"I'd tried out for AC/DC," Slesser tells *Classic Rock*, "but it seemed like Maiden's less straight-ahead rock might be a better fit for me. So I thought, 'Why not?'"

Slesser auditioned for Maiden in a rehearsal space in London's Chinatown. He was struck by the band's enthusiasm, but admits that even as he tried out he knew that they'd be taking their next steps without him.

"We tried three or four songs, *Iron Maiden* being one of them. And while I could do some of it, other songs fitted less well," he says. "I couldn't see it happening. If I'd joined, the songs might have been more bluesy, which didn't fit with Steve's vision for Maiden."

Still friends with Harris and Murray, Slesser says he has no regrets about missing out on the opportunity to front the band:

"I'd be better off financially, obviously," he laughs, "but I'm happy that I'm in charge of my own destiny."

Bruce Dickinson: Steve and myself always used to clash. He wanted to fire me after the first month of the *Number Of The Beast* tour.

Rod Smallwood: There was a bit of argy-bargy between them on stage.

Steve Harris: At first I thought I was imagining it. But there were nights on stage during the early part of that tour when Bruce used to, like, try and jostle me on stage. It was all done in fun… only you could tell it was a bit more than that sometimes.

Bruce Dickinson: You had basically a very passive band, except for Steve, who was right up front in the middle. And when I was watching them from the front I was like: "Hmm, I don't like the look of that, that's wrong. The singer should be standing there." So the first thing I did was move my little monitors into the middle, which got in his way. I'd be singing along, getting into the groove, and I'd feel this thump, and he'd be there, elbowing me out of the way. ➜

THE ART OF THE BEAST

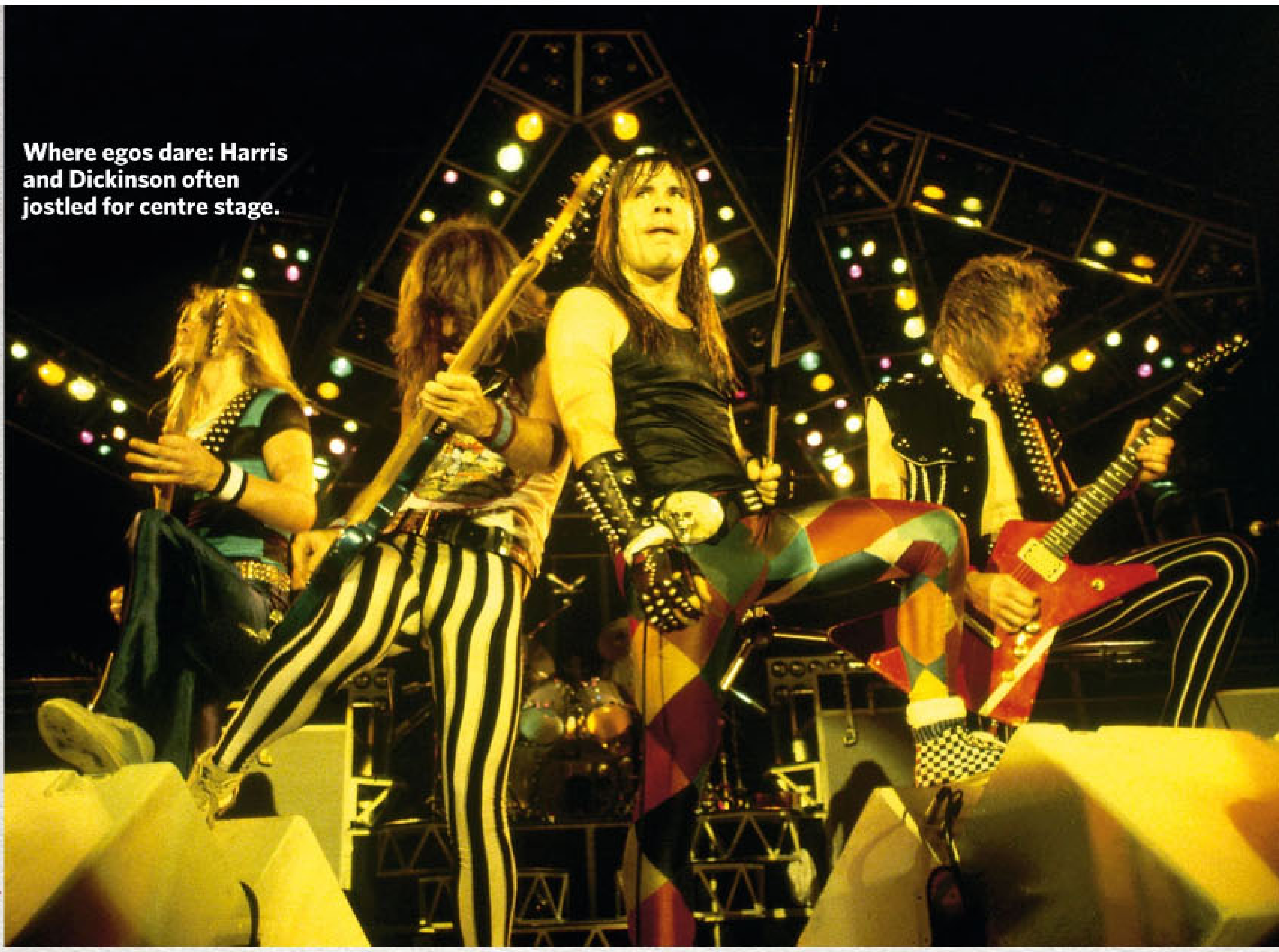
Maiden's sleeve artist Derek Riggs on his iconic *Number Of The Beast* artwork.

"The manager phoned me up and said they wanted a picture for a single cover that was about the devil and witchcraft and was called *Purgatory*. There was a *Dr. Strange* comic which had some big villian with Dr. Strange dangling on some strings like a puppet, which I read as a child. The picture came to mind right away. I thought I coud do a very effective heaven and hell thing using Eddie. Most of those hell backgrounds were taken from my knowledge of medieval European Christian art, which was full of such scenes.

"I spent two days and nights painting it. When the manager saw it he smiled and said: 'That will be great for the album,' and asked me to do another one for the single. I asked him if I could do some more work on it, having been done so quickly, but he was adamant that it was okay. So that was what you got.

"Did I listen to Maiden while was working? No. Working at that speed, I didn't have the time to listen to anything except my own frenzied heartbeat. Also, as I was working right through the night, Maiden blaring out would have upset the neighbours no end."

Run For Cover: The Art Of Derek Riggs, is available from www.derekriggs.com



Where egos dare: Harris and Dickinson often jostled for centre stage.

"A BUNCH OF 24-YEAR-OLDS LET LOOSE IN AMERICA, PRE-AIDS, WITH ENDLESS SUPPLIES OF PARTY MATERIAL AND WILLING YOUNG GIRLS…"
BRUCE DICKINSON ON THE BAND'S FIRST US TOUR

Steve Harris: It was like an ego thing. And it did make me wonder if he was right for the band. I don't know if he thought he had to sort of stamp out his territory or whatever, but he didn't need to.

Bruce Dickinson: We were young and we were all chucked into this huge shit-storm of success and we dealt with it in different ways. To a certain extent you make a Faustian deal when you join a successful band. There is a price that gets exacted upon you, and there's very little you can do about that except hope to come out the other end of it right-side up.

On May 11, 1982 Maiden took The Beast On The Road to America for more than 100 shows that took them through to October. In the south, the album's title track sparked protests from religious groups. "They wanted to believe all that rubbish about us being Satanists," said a bemused Steve Harris. At the end of the five-month US stint, *The Number Of The Beast* had broken into the Billboard Top 40, and Iron Maiden were the hottest new metal band on the planet.

Bill Barclay (guitar tech): The schedules were hefty. We did the Coliseum in El Paso [Texas], flew to England and did the Reading Festival, and the next show was in California. It was pretty heavy going.

Bruce Dickinson: We toured in station wagons, driving around hallucinating with tiredness. Rod said we couldn't afford a bus, until the tour manager was so exhausted one night that he fell asleep on his feet and sleepwalked off the end of the stage. At that point we got a tour bus. Which then became the subject of all manner of shenanigans.

Adrian Smith: We all liked a drink. And we did overindulge. Part of it was adjusting to the whole thing. I went from being in a pub-circuit band to being in a band that could sell out big venues. It did take a bit of getting used to that pressure.

Bruce Dickinson: The experience of that first US tour was like taking a very powerful drug every night. A bunch of 24-year-olds from England let loose in America, pre-Aids, with endless supplies of drink and party material and willing young girls? We weren't vicars, but at the same time we're not daft.

Adrian Smith: Was there a period when anyone considered stimulants harder than drink? I don't think we should go there in a family magazine. It was *mainly* booze, let's leave it at that.

Bruce Dickinson: I remember being pissed, crawling on my hands and knees down a hotel corridor in Tokyo, looking for bread rolls from the room service trays because I was so hungry. I caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror looking like a feral critter and I thought: "What a state you're in. Look at you!" I thought I'd better sort this out, because I could already see that 10-month world tours were going to be my life for the foreseeable future.

Steve Harris: Is it true that I used to feign sleep on long-haul flights just to avoid talking to Bruce? Ha ha. No, I don't think so. We've probably all feigned sleep to avoid one another at some point, but I don't recall specifically doing it to him. Are you trying to cause more arguments?

Thirty years after its release, *The Number Of The Beast* remains Iron Maiden's most enduring musical statement, and the record that turned them from an exciting young British band into a proper global concern, in turn wrenching the spotlight back from America to the UK.

Rod Smallwood: It was the record for the time. There was a lot of interest in metal worldwide, and this was the album that focused everybody. Before *Number Of The Beast* we were part of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. After *Number Of The Beast*, Maiden was a worldwide major act.

Steve Harris: I didn't think it was our best album at the time, and I still don't. There's a couple of tracks on it which I think are not quite so good. If *Total Eclipse* had been on the album instead of *Gangland* it would have been far better. Also, I think *Invaders* could have been replaced with something a bit better, only we didn't have anything else to replace it with at the time.

Bruce Dickinson: We knew that the songs were special. But if we'd known it would be acclaimed as one of the greatest albums in rock history we'd probably have cocked the whole thing up.

Additional sources: Run To the Hills: The Authorised Biography, by Mick Wall. Iron Maiden's Legacy Of The Beast European tour begins in May.

ROSS HALFIN

GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE GODS OF THE GUITAR

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THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

Rush

Tom Sawyer

Perhaps their most recognisable anthem, it was born from the unlikely coming together of a piece of classic American literature and a nutty Canadian poet.

Words:
Paul Elliott
Photograph:
**Andre Csillag/
Rex Features**

Within Rush's 37-year recording career there are a number of landmark songs: *Working Man* was their first track to get key radio airplay outside of their native Canada, and led to a worldwide deal with Mercury Records; *2112* secured the band's future when that Mercury contract hung in the balance; *The Spirit Of Radio* gave them the unlikely distinction of a UK Top 20 hit. But of all the songs in the Rush catalogue, the most famous is *Tom Sawyer*, the opening track from 1981's *Moving Pictures*, the band's greatest and biggest-selling album.

"*Tom Sawyer* is a real trademark song for us," says Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson. "Musically it's very powerful, and lyrically it has a spirit that resonates with a lot of people. It's kind of an anthem."

Rush had arrived at a crossroads when they came to write *Tom Sawyer*. In the 70s they had become the undisputed masters of progressive hard rock, famed for their epic conceptual pieces that played out over entire sides of vinyl. But with their first album of the 1980s – *Permanent Waves* – came a significant change.

"We began writing in a tighter, more economical form," says Lifeson. The result was that hit single, *The Spirit Of Radio*: a virtuoso-rock *tour de force* compacted into less than five minutes. And the song's lyrics fit neatly with this more direct approach. Bookish drummer Neil Peart, the author of all Rush lyrics since 1975, had previously found inspiration in ancient mythology and science fiction, but for *Permanent Waves* his writing was simpler, his subject matter more worldly.

Tom Sawyer was the crystallisation of this new, modern Rush: a powerful, finely crafted hard rock song with a punchy yet deeply philosophical message. But it was also a song for which Rush were indebted not only to a giant of American literature, Mark Twain, but also to a rather peculiar Canadian named Pye Dubois.

A poet and lyricist, Dubois worked with the band Max Webster, who were based in Sarnia, Ontario, in the same province as Rush's hometown of Toronto. The two bands were close, recording a song together, *Battle Scar*, that featured on Max Webster's 1980 album *Universal Juveniles*. "Those guys were big friends of ours," Lifeson recalls. "But Pye was a little mysterious – kind of a strange fellow! He was very quirky, a bit of a nut, but he did write great lyrics. And around 1980 he sent a poem to Neil with an idea to collaborate on a song. The original draft was called *Louie The Warrior*."

The poem was based on Twain's 1876 novel *The Adventures Of Tom Sawyer*, which all three members of Rush had studied in school. Peart in particular identified with the book's central themes of rebellion and independence. From *2112* through to *Freewill* on *Permanent Waves*, individuality was a recurring subject in Peart's lyrics. What Dubois created in *Louie The Warrior* was, in Peart's words, "a portrait of a modern-day rebel". Says Lifeson: "Neil took that idea and massaged it, took out some of Pye's lines and added his thing to it." Peart chose the simpler title of *Tom Sawyer* and completed the lyrics with an element of autobiography. As he put it, "Reconciling the boy and man in myself."

The music for *Tom Sawyer* was also a departure for Rush. Says Lifeson: "Structurally, the way the song develops is very interesting, going from that first verse into a bridge into a chorus and into the solo and then repeating. It wasn't a typical kind of structure for us at the time." Likewise, the music was written in an unorthodox fashion – for Rush, at least. "*Moving Pictures* was different for us in that it was more of a jam sort of thing," Lifeson explains. "A lot of the material for that record was written off the floor. That was certainly the case with *Tom Sawyer*. We were rehearsing in a little farm outside of Toronto. Half the barn was a garage and half was a small rehearsal space. We would typically just go in and jam and develop songs that way."

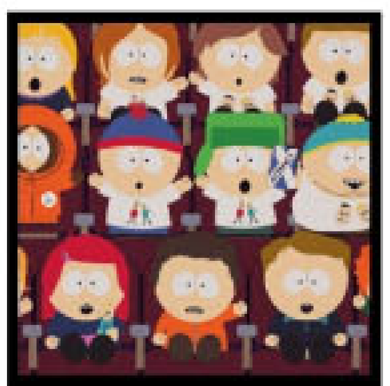
It was high summer when Rush wrote the songs for *Moving Pictures*. But by the time they began recording the album at Le Studio in Morin Heights, Quebec – the mountain retreat where the band had cut *Permanent Waves* – a mean Canadian winter had set in. "It was the coldest I've ever been in my life, that's for sure!" Lifeson laughs. "We were living in a house beside a lake, and the studio was on the other end of the lake. If we were brave enough, we walked through the woods. It was really beautiful, but it was minus 40 out there! I'm serious!" The promotional video for *Tom Sawyer*, shot at Le Studio, begins with a view of this snowbound landscape and ends with a pan out across the frozen lake.

Lifeson says of the recording: "On *Tom Sawyer*, the synthesiser is such a key part of that song. There was a good integration between the three of us and the keyboards. We still had that trio feel. Plus, we always felt that we had to replicate each song as faithfully as possible when we played it live, so *Tom Sawyer* was written in that way. There's no rhythm guitar under the guitar solo or anything like that."

"There's something in the lyric that people have always related to very strongly – the spirit of independence."

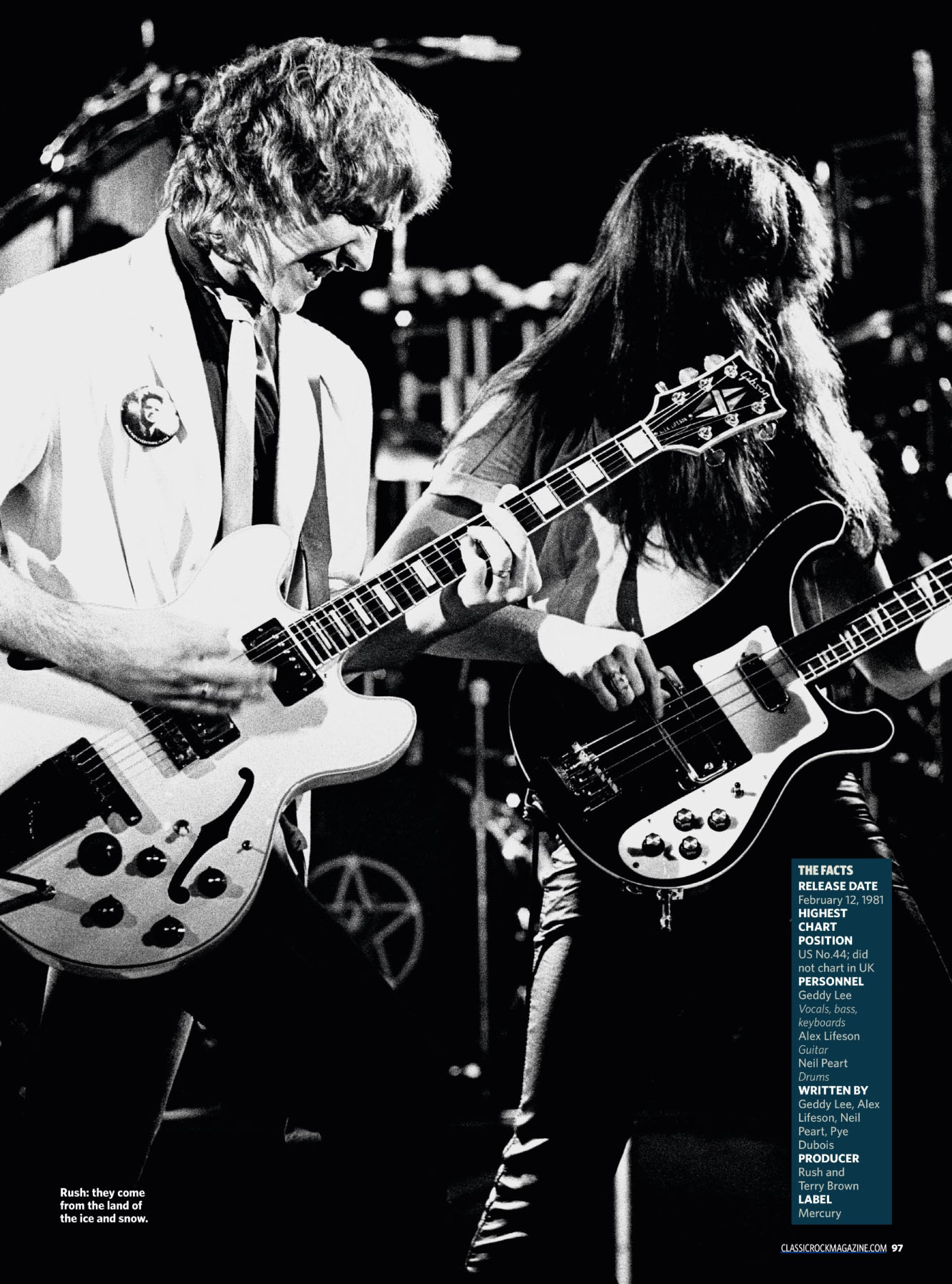
It's a song that proved pivotal to the band's development. Geddy Lee has called it the "defining piece of music" from Rush in the early 80s. For much of that decade, keyboards took an increasingly important role in the band's sound. And all of three decades on, the power of this song, and its message, has not diminished. "There's a freshness about that sound that still stands out," Lifeson says proudly. "And there's something in the lyric that people have always related to very strongly – the spirit of independence and adventure. It's just one of those special songs." ❼

Rush's A Farewell to Kings—40th Anniversary edition is out now in four different deluxe editions.



SOUTH PARK DOES TOM SAWYER

Rush drummer Neil Peart has long been viewed as a serious academic type, but it was his idea to have a comedy version of *Tom Sawyer* performed by the cast of *South Park*. Peart enlisted his friend Matt Stone, co-creator of *South Park*, to make a skit in which his cartoon characters are billed as Lil' Rush. Their performance quickly unravels when singer Eric Cartman fluffs his lines and rival Kyle Broflovski exclaims: "Those aren't the right lyrics, fat-ass!" Cartman snapped back: "I am Geddy Lee, and I will sing whatever lyrics I want!" The skit was screened at Rush gigs before the real band played *Tom Sawyer*. Says guitarist Alex Lifeson: "Matt did such a great job with it. We all had a great laugh. And the fans loved it!"



Rush: they come from the land of the ice and snow.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
February 12, 1981
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
US No.44; did not chart in UK
PERSONNEL
Geddy Lee
Vocals, bass, keyboards
Alex Lifeson
Guitar
Neil Peart
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson, Neil Peart, Pye Dubois
PRODUCER
Rush and Terry Brown
LABEL
Mercury

KNOWLEDGE
METAL HAMMER
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO METAL

VENOM

If you want to understand Venom today, argues John Doran, you need to understand why they made *Black Metal* 36 bloody years ago.

WORDS: JOHN DORAN

Venom today (left to right): Rage, Cronos, Dante

Fire? Check. Swords? Check. Metal? Check!

The worst scene in any movie made about the career of a rock or heavy metal band is always the montage where they write their hit. No matter how cringeworthy the 'special' effects employed when they take acid for the first time are; no matter how egregiously untruthful the depiction of their relationships with the cops, their label and with groupies; nothing sucks quite so hard as the scene that purports to pull the curtain back on the songwriting process. Because never in the history of Western culture has the following ever happened. Guitarist: "Hey, you guys, I think I've come up with a smoking riff." Singer: "Hey, that's great man. I've got some lyrics that would sound really good with that." Bass player and drummer joining in: "Wow, this has a great vibe! I think you're on to something dudes!" Then cut to a wide shot of the full band playing *Bohemian Rhapsody* under a hail of panties at the Long Beach Arena, California.

The thing that most people would sooner not admit is that the creative process is actually messy, confusing, lengthy, boring, repetitive and, more often than not, completely accidental. This is one of the reasons why mockumentaries have always been much more instructive than rock-umentaries. *Spinal Tap,* for example, is a much more valuable document of what being in a successful band is actually like than Oliver Stone's *The Doors*. Sure, *Tap* is obviously a comedy, but it doesn't contain anything that's particularly unbelievable… none of the lads ever spend any time talking to Native American spirit guides in the desert, for example.

The same rule applies when entire genres are being born. It may feel like the genesis of heavy metal should have been sparked when a lightning bolt hit a mountain, but in reality, the birth of the song *Black Sabbath* would not have made for a great fly-on-the-wall documentary. As momentous as this event was, something that happened over a period of several weeks punctuated by many arguments over who was making the next round of brews and interminable conversations over exactly which take of the line *'Oh, no, no! Please God help me!'* was the most convincingly terrifying and how loud the bell should be in the final mix, would not have made for great cinema.

This is one of the reasons why full credit should be given to Conrad 'Cronos' Lant, the mainstay of extreme metal pioneers Venom for refusing to talk up or mystify the making of the *Black Metal* album in 1982, no matter how influential and important it went on to become. Speaking on the eve of the release of his band's 14th album, *Fallen Angels*, he is quite candid about what is arguably the most important album in the birth of extreme metal ever recorded. He says: "We had no idea what we were doing was going to become such a big thing. So many bands were in the

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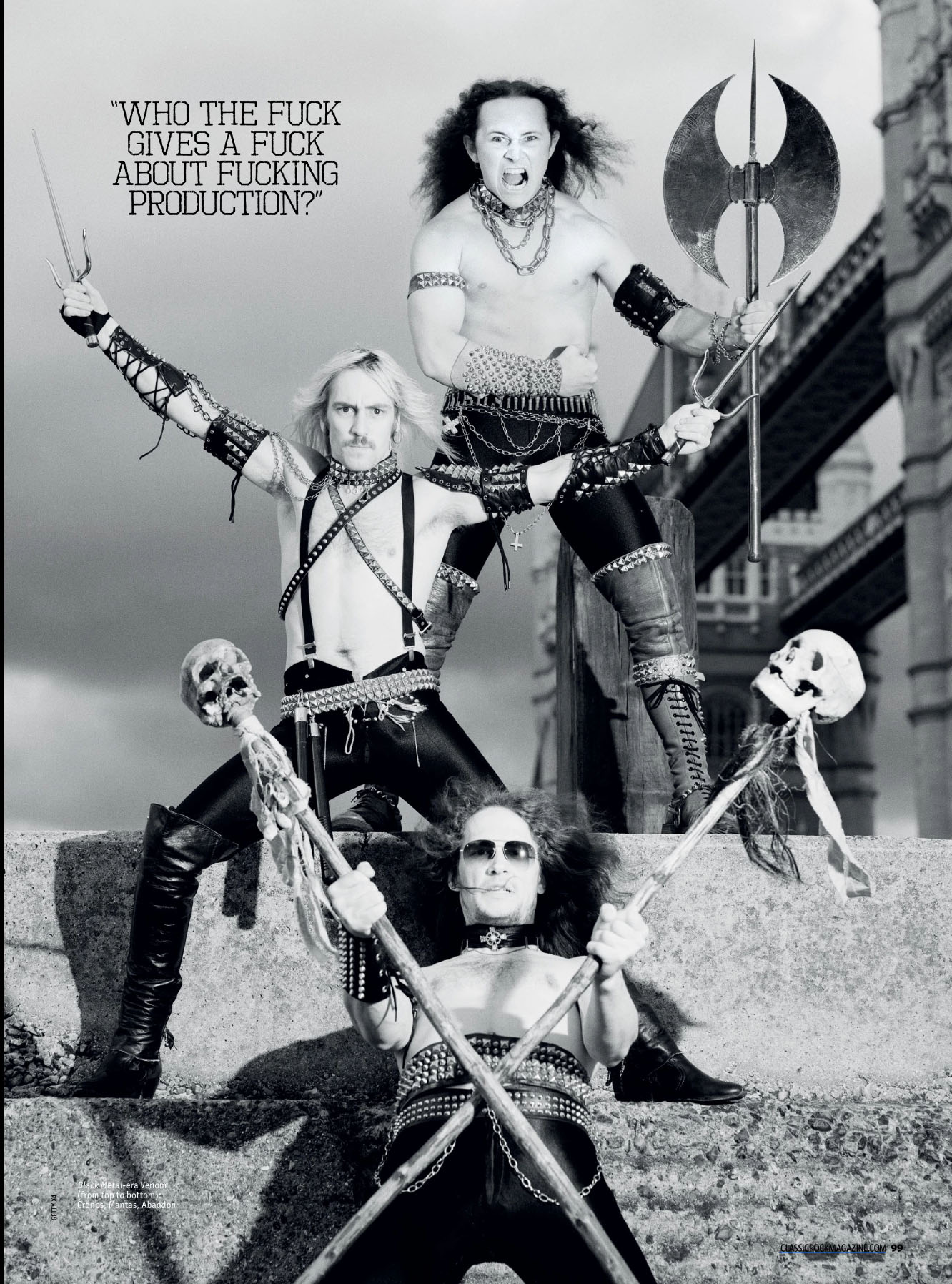
MAIN SHOT: FIN COSTELLO/GETTY IMAGES



> "WHO THE FUCK GIVES A FUCK ABOUT FUCKING PRODUCTION?"

Black Metal-era Venom (from top to bottom): Cronos, Mantas, Abaddon

GETTY X4

trying to be the next Iron Maiden or the next this or that. We just wanted to do what we enjoyed. You had a band like Tygers Of Pan Tang always dropping Purple references; you know, 'We want to be the next Deep Purple.' Well, Venom never did that. We never said that. We said, 'We are now, we are new, we are Venom.'

* * *

Venom formed in Newcastle in 1979 and coalesced into their early classic lineup of Cronos on bass and vocals, Tony 'Abaddon' Bray on drums and Jeff 'Mantas' Dunn on guitar the following year. There were several key environmental factors at work during this unholy conception. Newcastle in the late 1970s was a hard bitten, industrial city, destabilised and depressed by high unemployment and a profound lack of meaningful choice available to the majority, working-class inhabitants who lived there. It was a city where you "put on your father's clothes when you were old enough and then went and did his job". Except, according to Cronos, "That wasn't an option in 1979 – there were no jobs left." Everything from the dark Satanic Mills of the English industrial revolution to the once-mighty ship yards had been forced to shut up shop, leaving most of the erstwhile sons of toil signing on and pissed off. The city was, in many respects, similar to Birmingham, the home of Black Sabbath, Judas Priest and half of Led Zeppelin, all favourite groups of the bassist. Except a decade later, many young Geordies had fallen under another spell as well as metal: "Growing up in the 70s in the north of England, punk meant everything to me. The whole industry was dying, the shipyards, everything. There was no future. There was no hope. Punk music was a way for the real people in this country to get a voice. It was the great unwashed getting a say for once, shouting, 'Fucking hell, we're not happy about this.'"

Cronos: Venom in his blood

> "FOR ME, *BLACK METAL* IS OUR FIRST PROPER ALBUM BECAUSE *WELCOME TO HELL* IS JUST DEMOS"
>
> CRONOS

Seeing his desire to be in a metal band as a mission, he was drawn to work with Abaddon and Mantas simply because they struck him as the only people he had met who were as driven as him. Their chops were the last thing on his mind. And in return, the other two were keen to work with Cronos because he had access to a studio. Ironically, the only place they had played with any great regularity before they recorded their debut album, *Welcome To Hell*, was a church. He laughs and says: "Our practise room was a church, our first ever gig was in a church and our first demo was recorded in a church – I've still got the tapes; we sounded fucking terrible. There was this Methodist vicar who liked the idea of putting a few bob in his pocket, so we would set up on the altar just in front of the pulpit and away we went. The Vicar used to let us in and then fuck off. So we ransacked the place basically… ha ha ha! I've still got some of the big old candles and crucifixes that we nicked off him."

Another influence on *Black Metal* was a feeling that they'd been misled by their record label, Neat, during the recording of their debut; an experience they were keen not to repeat. The frontman had worked overtime at the studios where he worked for months until he could afford to pay for a heavily discounted three-day period when it wasn't in use. After blagging help and tape they were ready to roll. There was just one problem: "We recorded *Welcome To Hell* in three days and they were just demos. We thought that if the label liked them we'd be given a green light and we'd have the chance to record them properly as a great new album over a week or so. But then when the record company heard the tapes they said, 'No, we like it the way it is, we'll put it out like that.' We must have looked horrified… there were timing issues, there were tuning issues but they just said, 'No, it goes out like that or not at all.' They had our arms forced up behind our backs

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+ RICE £1·75
MAMBA + MASH £1·30
SNAKE RATTLE + ROLL (WITH BUTTER) £1·50
BRAISED
Venom's riders were getting more and more outlandish…

THE FACTS

YEARS ACTIVE
1979 – PRESENT

BLACK METAL-ERA MEMBERS
CONRAD 'CRONOS' LANT Bass and vocals
JEFFREY 'MANTAS' DUNN Guitar
TONY 'ABADDON' BRAY Drums

CURRENT MEMBERS
CONRAD 'CRONOS' LANT Bass and vocals
LA RAGE Guitar
DANTE Drums

STUDIO RELEASES
WELCOME TO HELL 1981
BLACK METAL 1982
AT WAR WITH SATAN 1983
PRIME EVIL 1989
METAL BLACK 2006
FALLEN ANGELS 2011
FROM THE VERY DEPTHS 2015

WWW.VENOMSLEGIONS.COM

Venom
Fallen Angels

FIN COSTELLO/GETTY IMAGES - KEVIN HODAPP/FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY

The following year Venom still had everything to prove and the little that they had achieved to lose. The fact that their biggest supporter in the press, the legendary Geoff Barton, described *Welcome To Hell* as having "the hi-fi dynamics of a 50-year-old pizza", really showed that they had their work cut out for them… and this is where Cronos's tenacity revealed itself fully for the first time: "We knew we had to record this one properly. We knew what kind of tricks might be played on us, so we made sure all those songs were nailed before we went into the studio. And for me, *Black Metal* is our first proper album, because *Welcome To Hell* is just demos."

> "BURZUM AND MAYHEM HAD THAT PUNK RAWNESS – THE PISS, THE SHIT, THE SNOT, THE VOMIT THAT WE HAD"
>
> CRONOS

He laughs as he describes the sheer luxury that was offered them during the week-long extravaganza: "We got the chance to overdub some solos. We got the chance to redo some vocals. *Welcome To Hell* took three days to record and mix and *Black Metal* took seven days. But we had our shit down so tight we knew all we had to do was to get a sound on the kit and a sound on the back line and BANG!, just nail the fucker."

* * *

Black Metal opens with a literal assault on the listener. There isn't even a run-in groove on the album – the first sound you hear is a horrible noise the second the needle hits the groove (if you're listening to the original vinyl it does this anyhow). It seemed that punk nihilism, the heavy industry of the area, a real desire to shock the listener out of complacency and a vicious sense of mischief were coming together in a screeching sonic scree. The frontman cackles as he explains: "That is literally a chainsaw cutting into metal. Abaddon used to work in a steel factory. I was saying to him, 'We really need to find this annoying sound to go at the start of the album.' And he said, 'Fucking hell, if you've ever heard metal grinding on metal, it's a sound that will go right through you.' We took huge chunks of steel into the studio, put them into a vice and away we went. It was a fucking incredible sound, menacing."

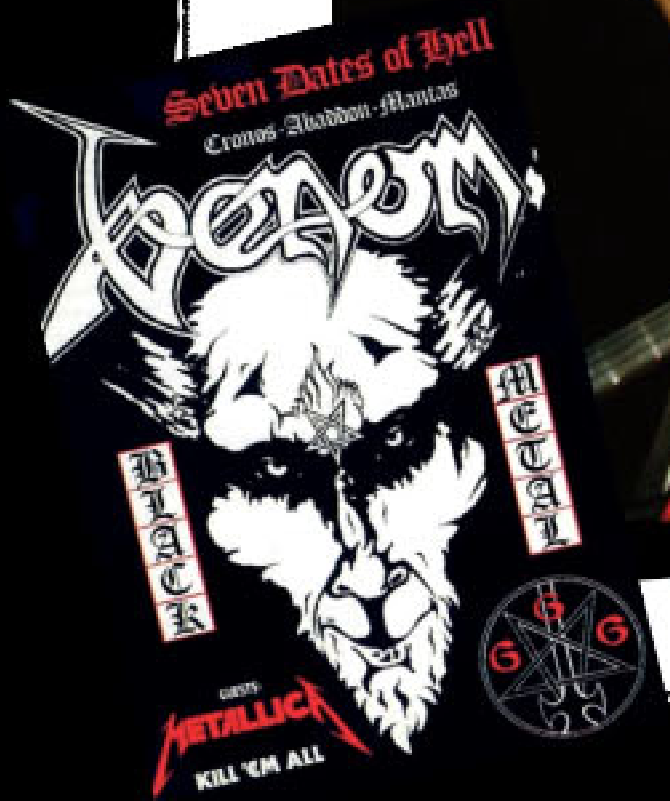
But this was simply one of many strategies that he was using to make the record lively, unexpected and unique. He took a more literal approach to spooking out the listener on the track *Buried Alive*: "I came to the studio with all these buckets of mud, sand and flour and we put some microphones inside some cardboard boxes in a stairwell. Then we got all these spades and slowly started filling in the boxes with the mud and soil. There were a load of guys into the studio when we did the whole, 'We came into this world with nothing and with nothing we shall depart' bit. They were doing the crying and whimpering as if they were at a real funeral, and the funny thing was we had to do this a lot of times because no one was whimpering or crying, people were actually trying to hold back laughter. And when we came back to listen to the tape the weird thing was that the actual laughter actually sounded like crying, and that's what you can hear."

Black metal as a genre would go on to mean many different things to many different people over the next three decades, but to Conrad Lant it means exactly the same thing today as it did then: "It was our way of distinguishing our music from the run-of-the-mill heavy metal that was coming out back then. When people were telling me that rock was dead at the end of the 1970s, I couldn't help but wish that most of it was because it was that fucking lame. 'Black metal' was coined because I wanted to describe how different we were to other bands of the time, even how different we were to most 'heavy metal' bands of the time."

* * *

The influence of the album is so vast it can barely be measured. As well as providing the name and many of the genre conventions for one of the healthiest sub-genres of metal still thriving today, it also set the foundations for much of what we now call extreme metal; in particular thrash, death and speed metal. If most people outside of their rabid fanbase in the UK sneered at a

Supreme evil + high fashion = win



Cronos: seeing red

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GOLDEN GODS

Cronos with Behemoth's Nergal at *Hammer's* Golden Gods 2009

GETTY X2

Gaaahh! Don't you just HATE it when zips break?

perceived lack of technical prowess in Venom, this was easily offset by their growing legion of fans in the US. And it really didn't hurt that some of them were in bands such as Metallica, Slayer and Exodus.

But of course, if we had to boil down the significance of this album to one time and place it would probably be to Oslo in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Everything about Venom was sacrosanct to the second wave of BM, or the practitioners of True Norwegian Black Metal, from the lo-fi aesthetic, the Satanic imagery, the desire to alienate the listener and even the style of dress.

Cronos says: "I was sent early demo tapes by acts like Burzum and Mayhem. They reminded me of early Venom in that it was guys who cared more about the passion of the music than the accuracy of it. It reminded me of our first two albums and how I was 10 years earlier, that enthusiasm and hunger. Of all the bands who came up after Venom – not Metallica and not Exodus – they were the only ones who had that 'looseness', that punk rawness, the piss, the shit, the snot, the vomit that we had.

"I could hear it in those young Norwegian bands who were going hell for leather. Those guys still cite Venom as a big influence but they need to take more credit for what they did. They evolved the sound. I just think it was a shame that it was overshadowed by that church-burning bullshit."

He's keen to point out that the influence can often be felt in unexpected places: "I think the lasting impact of *Black Metal* »

ESSENTIAL

THE ALBUMS EVERY METALHEAD SHOULD OWN

WELCOME TO HELL

NEAT, 1981

LANDMARK
Venom
Welcome To Hell

Venom came to prominence during NWOBHM but didn't have much to do with it. They shared a break-neck speed with Motörhead and a punk rawness with Paul Di'Anno's Iron Maiden, but they were a unique proposition. One-time extreme metal pioneers Judas Priest were taking a break from innovative forward motion in order to become a successful arena act in the US, and you only have to compare Abaddon's frantic drum work on the title track to anything on the disappointing *Point Of Entry* to see that Venom were now filling a gap that once belonged to the Brummies. The album is packed full of novel ideas and riffs, but one of its finest moments is *Witching Hour*, which was clearly an influence on the young Slayer.

BLACK METAL

NEAT, 1982

ICONIC
Venom
BLACK METAL

Venom had been burned by *Welcome To Hell*, and the resulting combination of urgency, fear, determination and straining hard against ability gave *Black Metal* its edge. Interestingly, the album that gave rise to one of the most fiercely constrained metal sub-genres ever devised is relatively stylistically diverse. There are the songs that would influence the first wave black metallers such as the title track and (obviously) *Countess Bathory*, the proto thrashers such as *Leave Me In Hell* and *To Hell And Back*, the doomy *Buried Alive* and straight-up rock'n'roll of *Teacher's Pet*.

EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK

NEAT, 1986

LIVE EVIL
Venom
Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

Music fans who lambasted Venom for being pompous and serious failed to note that a lot of what they were doing was executed with tongue in cheek. Venom's sense of humour is clearly on display on this, their first and most satisfying live album. The album is named after the Beethoven composition which is used as the band's intro tape and roughly translates as 'A Little Night Music'. It pokes fun at the band's critics who attacked them for a lack of virtuosity and also because there is nothing little or classical about this hectic recording of consecutive gigs at London's Hammersmith Apollo and New York's Ritz in 1986.

PRIME EVIL

UNDER ONE FLAG, 1989

COMEBACK
Prime Evil

Venom's stock was so low in 1987 that even Cronos quit. The only constant member was Abaddon, although Mantas did rejoin. The lineup was completed by Al Barnes on rhythm guitar and Atomkraft bassist/vocalist Tony Dolan. The distinguishing element was not Dolan's vocals but the experimentation with synthesisers and atmospheric guitar FX which added a gothic tribal element. There would barely have been a Venom fan not excited by the classic line-up reunion in 1996 but for fans who had stuck with Venom through thick and thin, *Prime Evil* was evidence of some reward.

The Neighbourhood Watch programme was very successful. Everyone hid indoors

FIN COSTELLO/GETTY IMAGES - FRANK WHITE & KEVIN HODAPP/FRANK WHITE PHOTO AGENCY

Venom
At War with Satan
Venom

THE PLAYLIST

THE FIVE TRACKS YOU NEED

WITCHING HOUR
(WELCOME TO HELL, 1981)

COUNTESS BATHORY
(BLACK METAL, 1982)

BLACK METAL
(BLACK METAL, 1982)

AT WAR WITH SATAN
(AT WAR WITH SATAN, 1983)

STRAIGHT TO HELL
(HELL, 2008)

for me is that it has earned us respect in areas that you wouldn't expect. When you hear someone like Dave Grohl say how important it was to him when he was in school then that's a big deal. Also it's further-reaching than you think. It's like when you meet a lawyer in a suit and he's asking you for a *Black Metal* shirt. The secret Venom fans. Those are the kinds of things that last because you realise how important it was for a lot of other people as well."

> "WHEN YOU HEAR DAVE GROHL SAY HOW IMPORTANT *BLACK METAL* WAS TO HIM IN SCHOOL, IT'S A BIG DEAL"
>
> CRONOS

The story of *Black Metal* isn't complete, however, until we look at where the band are today, nearly 30 years later. As befits such an extreme act, their history has been complex and hard to follow at times; Cronos himself wasn't in the lineup between 1987 and 1996. At times they made the mistake of not trusting their own instincts and succumbed to the easy fix of pro-tools, expensive foreign studios and even a swords and sorcery direction. While there have been good albums released in this period, the Cronos-free *Prime Evil* and the more recent re-engagement with the big red horned chap downstairs, *Metal Black*, their 2011 album, *Fallen Angels,* really sees the band trying to reconnect with the simple formula that won them so many fans in the first place.

It might be about the apocalyptic predictions made in ancient Mayan religious texts about the end of mankind that will occur at Christmas time next year when Earth collides with the planet Nibiru, but really it is the year zero policy of the band which has interested Venom watchers. Cronos explains: "With *Fallen Angels* we went back to basics. The band has written the album and we weren't thinking 'deal' or 'label' or anything like that. We just thought, 'Let's write some songs, in our own time and get some mics on the drumkits and mics on the 4x12 Marshall cabinets.' It's like the way we did it in the early 80s. Yes, it was done that way back then because we didn't have money to do it any other way but this way, to me, is also the best way; it's raw and honest."

Current guitarist Rage puts it more succinctly when he says: "Worrying about production is a modern thing. When I was growing up, me and my mates didn't sit round saying, 'Have you heard the new Deep Purple album? I don't really like the production on it…' Who the fuck gives a fuck about fucking production?" While drummer Dante says the approach has meant that "we can play the entire album live – and we do love playing all of it live."

Cronos agrees: "Absolutely. I think it's about the intensity and conviction that you put into the recording. If you play that song with fire and vengeance you can get away with dodgy production because people pick up on the actual vibe of the performance in the studio and that's how I think the first Venom records did OK. Because people weren't going, 'Oh I think there's something wrong with the production,' they were saying, 'Fuck me!' They got where we were coming from. They got the fact that we were young and full of 'ARRRGHHHH!'"

When asked if he thinks he's cracked it this time Cronos simply laughs: "Never. As soon as I've done one album I start worrying about the next. I remember coming out of the studio after finishing *Black Metal* and seeing a skip in the street full of rubbish metal and I thought, 'Christ, what if it's an omen?' I immediately started worrying about whether the next album would be any good."

As always, there is no rest for the wicked.

Hmmm… musical differences, guys?

Venom: back with a vengeance

THE FINAL WORD

OUR HEROES AS RATED BY THEIR PEERS

SHAGRATH

VOCALIST • DIMMU BORGIR

"My dad used to work in a record company and he got a lot of free vinyl, so when I was a little kid I was looking through them and picked out *From Hell To The Unknown*. It made a really big impression. When I started buying more vinyl myself, I picked up *Black Metal, Welcome To Hell* and *Possessed* and got more and more into it. Venom has been a very important band for me and also for the Norwegian black metal scene. They were the soil where the seed of Norwegian black metal has grown from. The imagery was extremely attractive. I remember the Venom VHS [*The 7th Date Of Hell – Live At Hammersmith*] and that was the coolest stage performance. We've taken a lot of inspiration from that – not musically, but visually."

STEVE BROWN

THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

DIAMOND HEAD

★AM I EVIL

It took a year and a half to write, but this metal epic launched Diamond Head, and inspired another band that went on to become one of the biggest on the planet.

WORDS: GREG PRATO

DID LARS JAM WITH THE 'HEAD?

Lars Ulrich was at many a Diamond Head gig during the early 80s - he even crashed in the homes of both Brian Tatler and Sean Harris for a period. Ulrich was also at several 'Head rehearsals at the time.

Which leads one to wonder: did the future Metallica drummer ever jam with the band, or even mention a desire to give it a go himself?

"He didn't say: 'I'm a drummer' or 'I'm going to form a band,'" Tatler says. "He didn't say anything like that. If I picture myself hanging with a band that I like, I probably wouldn't have the nerve to say: 'Let's have a go on your guitar.' He probably was slightly in awe and thought: 'I ain't got the nerve to sit on the same drum stool as Duncan [Scott] and take over.'"

The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal certainly spawned its fair share of anthems during the early 80s – Maiden's *Running Free*, Saxon's *Wheels Of Steel* etc. One gem that tends to get overlooked is Diamond Head's mighty epic *Am I Evil*. In fact, some believe it's a Metallica song, due to that band having covered it on their 1984 EP *Creeping Death* and have played it live regularly ever since.

According to Diamond Head co-founder/guitarist Brian Tatler, back in 1980 a lot of work and planning went into the making of what became a metal classic.

"I can remember wanting to write a song heavier than Black Sabbath's *Symptom Of The Universe*," Tatler recalls. "So when I came up with that riff, I think we all said: 'That's good. We should work on that.'

"The song evolved over a period of 18 months. We seemed to keep adding to it. We added the fast section, and then I must have come up with the intro – which was kind of based on *Mars* from *The Planets* suite [an orchestral work by Gustav Holst] – and that got sewn onto the beginning. I can remember coming up with the ending, and the very last thing to be written was the guitar solo section, where it changes key, and the tapping. I think we started it around 1978 and finished around 1980, when we went in to record the album [*Lightning To The Nations*, 1980]."

To match Tatler's heavy riffing, singer Sean Harris came up with the suitably dark lyrics, which included the most extreme opening of any metal song up to then: '*My mother was a witch/She was burned alive/Thankless little bitch/For the tears I cried*.'

"'*My mother was a witch*' was a great opening line," Tatler says. "His mum probably took offence, but she's probably forgiven him now.

I'm not sure what the whole thing's about. It just kind of works as a rock song. I suppose you could say it's about evil in man – good and bad; the yin and yang."

Shortly after the completion of the song, the group tried it out on an audience. As Tatler recalls, it immediately passed the test: "As far as I remember, it always went down well.

We soon learned that slow songs didn't work live; the faster ones would stay in the set. *Am I Evil* must have gone down well, because we probably would have chucked it out otherwise."

Tatler points out that *Am I Evil* appeared on two different Diamond Head studio albums: "We recorded it for the White album [aka *Lightning To The Nations*]. We had to re-record it for the *Borrowed Time* album, and it felt a bit strange doing it again. But on the White album, I do definitely remember listening back to it and – once I'd got the guitar solo right and all the keys that change underneath the guitar solo – it just blew me away."

Tatler also recalls how he got his particular guitar sound on *Am I Evil*: "There's a slightly strange sound on the guitar which is a wah-wah – this Morley Power Wah Boost. It was set at a cutting, 'nasal' position. It gave it a little more of an 'evil' sound, I suppose."

> **"You never play that song and think: 'That's a bag of shit.'"**

While the song instantly became a favourite among Diamond Head fans, Tatler remembers the day he was introduced to Metallica's version of it: "We were in the studio, and Sean had gotten a copy of [Metallica's] *Creeping Death*, the 12-inch single, with *Am I Evil* on the B-side. We listened to it, and thought: 'It's heavier and tighter,' but we didn't think it was any better than our version. Because, of course, we're proud of our own recording.

"We had no idea that Metallica were going to become the biggest band in the world. At this stage, in 1984, they were on Music For Nations, and it didn't look like they had the potential to conquer the world – to us. We knew Lars [Ulrich, drums], and we knew how ambitious he was, but I don't think any of us had a clue that they were going to take that style of metal and bring it to the masses in the way they did. I'm thankful that they did, because I don't know what I'd do without the songwriter's royalties of those four [Diamond Head] songs they've covered [*Am I Evil*, *Helpless*, *The Prince* and *It's Electric*]. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so of course we're flattered that they covered us. They could have covered Witchfinder General, couldn't they? [laughs]"

"Hey Lars! Here's a song for ya..."

Having split up in the mid-80s, Diamond Head reunited sporadically throughout the 90s, before Tatler soldiered on without Harris. To this day *Am I Evil* remains in the set-list.

"Every time we play it live, that riff seems to stir up something in the audience, and it's always a winner," Tatler says. "You just can't fail if you fire into that riff. The crowd duly responds. It's just got something about it. It's fairly easy to play as well. It almost seems like, if you like rock, it's one of the first riffs you learn. And I quite like that – it's not some clever, complicated thing. It's like a *Smoke On The Water* – a nice, simple, heavy riff that you can hum and remember."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Tatler agrees that *Am I Evil* is among Diamond Head's best songs: "I would say it's one of the best, yes. It had all the ingredients – a good riff, a good chorus, it went fast, there's a big guitar solo in it, it had good dynamics… Songs like that are hard to write.

I don't know how we did some of those songs. They don't obey rules of songwriting; we did whatever we felt, rather than followed any rules like verse-bridge-chorus.

"There was a naïveté in the early songs. Like I said, it always works. You never play that song and think: 'That's a bag of shit.'"

ROSS HALFIN X2

"That song *Am I Evil* is rather good." A young Geoff Barton (far right) gives an equally young Diamond Head his seal of approval.

IDOLS

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
1 July 1980

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Not released as a single

PERSONNEL
Sean Harris
Vocals
Brian Tatler
Guitar
Colin Kimberley
Bass
Duncan Scott
Drums

WRITTEN BY
Brian Tatler/
Sean Harris

PRODUCER
Diamond Head and Reg Fellows

LABEL
Happy Face

FACT
The *Lightning To The Nations* album was originally not for sale in shops, but available only at gigs and via mail order (the latter being how Lars Ulrich obtained his copy).

Stand up and shout: a defiant Dio makes a comeback.

PEARL DIVER

Many believed **Ronnie James Dio** was dead and buried when he quit Black Sabbath for a solo career at the beginning of the 1980s. But the singer surprised the hell out of everyone when he came up with *Holy Diver*. Here he looks back at the making of a classic album.

WORDS: GEOFF BARTON

By 1983 Ronnie James Dio's career had already enjoyed not one but two remarkable creative peaks.

As singer with Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, in 1976 Dio helped concoct the amazing *Rainbow Rising* – a milestone album in the annals of heavy rock, where the thermo-nuclear magniloquence of the Man In Black's guitar playing was in perfect synch with Ronnie's flamboyant lyrical musings and exalted tones.

Four years later, in 1980, Dio almost single-handedly rescued Black Sabbath from the depths of post-Ozzy oblivion. Cynics said the appointment of the man born Ronald Padovana as the band's new vocalist was doomed to failure. But that was before they heard the results of that unlikely (not to say unholy) alliance: *Heaven & Hell*. With Dio at the helm, the Sabs' growling metal machine became something altogether more sleek and streamlined. As mighty as it was mystical. As brooding as it was bombastic.

No one expected Dio to match remotely those twin achievements when he went solo. But with 1983's *Holy Diver*, the debut album from Dio the band, Ronnie again defied his critics by producing a classic rock album par excellence. The man who cut his teeth in Ronnie & The Prophets and Elf assembled a brand new group featuring drummer Vinny Appice, who he had worked with in Sabbath, and ex-Rainbow bass player Jimmy Bain. On guitar was a relatively unknown Irishman, Vivian Campbell, formerly of Sweet Savage and now a member of Def Leppard. "I just remember being so fired up and so confident in what I was going to do," says Dio today.

Rock like an Egyptian…

"It wasn't a matter of trying to match the standards of *Rainbow Rising* or *Heaven & Hell*, because those were special events. But I still felt extremely confident that I could make a great album of my own."

More than 20 years after its release, *Holy Diver* still cuts the mustard (or sprinkles the curry powder, bearing in mind Ronnie's propensity for a good Indian). As this issue of *Classic Rock* goes on sale, the diminutive frontman with the voice of Goliath is reaching the climax of his 'An Evening With…' British tour. Each Dio show naturally features a host of songs from across the man's huge back catalogue, but the main attraction is *Holy Diver*, which is being played in its chain-whipping, priest-drowning, twin-horned entirety. *Holy Diver* was also reissued as a digitally remastered special-edition CD on September 30.

When *Holy Diver* was conceived it was in the golden age of vinyl. Would it have turned out to be a different type of album in the CD age?

It would have had more songs on it. Absolutely. Vinyl can only hold a certain amount of music. But that's

GETTY X5

part of the magic of the medium. With only 40 minutes or so to work with, you had to make sure every song was of optimum quality. There was no need to add stuff just to fill up an album. People expect much more in this age of CDs, DVDs and downloads. The restrictions of the vinyl format actually worked to the benefit of *Holy Diver*. All the tracks are so good, much like *Rainbow Rising* or *Heaven & Hell*. The songs just spoke volumes about how good the album was. Still is. It didn't really matter that you couldn't extend it by another 10 or 20 minutes.

How much pressure did you feel at the time, as a fledgling solo artist?
I never really felt there was pressure to equal or improve upon the things that came before *Holy Diver*. I've always felt that you shouldn't have to live up to what you did before, you should just carry on and be what you are. Maybe I felt pressure for success. But that was only natural.

You produced *Holy Diver* yourself – wasn't that adding to the pressure?
Martin [Birch] was unavailable at the time – I think he was doing an Iron Maiden album. He certainly would always have been my first consideration. So when Martin wasn't available I decided to do the production. We had enough new ingredients in this pot to blend without bringing in an untried producer. An outside influence would've been more difficult. My head was probably too big for my hat at that time. But it did work. I really felt that taking on the producer's role was a feather in my cap.

How do you rate the contributions of the other members of Dio on *Holy Diver*?
It was a very magical time. The right people came together at the right moment. It wasn't because Vinny and I had played together before, or Jimmy and I had played together before, and only one new factor [Vivian Campbell] was being added. Take a look at the songwriting credits – it wasn't as if they were a bunch of sidemen interpreting my songs. I didn't say: "Stand back boys, it's my band." I only wrote two songs by myself: *Holy Diver* and *Don't Talk To Strangers*. I wrote them before we put the band together. But following on from that the other guys' contributions were immense.

Rainbow: Tony Carey, Ritchie Blackmore, Jimmy Bain, Cozy Powell, Ronnie James Dio.

And [keyboard player] Claude Schnell's moustache was also immense.
Claude wasn't there for the first album. We hired Claude to be the keyboard player for the tour we did.

The keyboard work on *Holy Diver* isn't actually that prominent.
Jimmy [Bain] and I played all the keyboards on that album which is one reason why it's not so prominent. Because it's not very good! I just did not want to get bogged down by keyboards at that point. I wanted it to be a lot more raw, a lot more approachable, without too much padding in it. If it'd been Claude playing it would obviously have been a lot more prolific. But I didn't want keyboards to get in the way. We became a bit more keyboard-oriented as the band progressed. I think that's just a natural progression. If you have a great tool you may as well use it.

[Vivian Campbell left Dio acrimoniously after the band's third album, *Sacred Heart*. Campbell famously described Dio as "one of the most odious people I've ever come across in the music business". Which explains Ronnie's taciturn answers to the following.] Everyone was querying your decision to put so much trust on a young guitarist for *Holy Diver*.
Uh-uh.

Dio with Black Sabbath.

But that trust was borne out by the results.
Oh, I think so.

Talking about guitarists you've worked with in the past, Ritchie Blackmore is touring the UK with Blackmore's Night shortly. If he turned up at one of your shows, would you let him jam with you?
Of course, if he wanted to. I have nothing but the greatest of respect for Ritchie. I've always said he's a genius. He gave me my greatest opportunity [with Rainbow] and to have a guy like that playing with you would be an honour.

Would you jam with Blackmore's Night?
If he asked me to I might. But I don't think it would be something I'd look forward to.

Deep Purple did it with *Machine Head*, The Stooges recently did it with *Funhouse*: it's a growing trend for a classic band/artist to build a show around a classic album. Is it a matter of having to reinvent yourself every so often?
I don't think so. I've never felt very reinventable. It wasn't something that I'd even considered doing until the question was posed. I was asked: "Would you like to do the *Holy Diver* tour?" At that point it wasn't called 'An Evening With…' I don't really like that title. It sounds like we're supposed to sit on stools and play an acoustic set. Which we're not doing, incidentally.

These are epic shows you're playing at the moment. It's quite an undertaking for a man of your age, if you don't mind us saying.
No, I don't mind you saying. But that really doesn't have anything to do with it. You're either good at what you do or you're not, no matter how old you are. There are still some old honkers out there doing some pretty good stuff. But yes, it's quite an undertaking to do all that maerial. It will be what it will be, and I can only guarantee that it will be good.

HOLY DIVER

RONNIE'S TRACK-BY-TRACK RUN DOWN

Stand Up & Shout

Are the lyrics, *'You are the driver/You own the road/You are the fire/Go on explode'* a reference to you and your burgeoning solo career?

It was really more of a way of saying to people you don't have to be told what to do, you can do whatever you set your mind to, so stand up and shout and just go for it.

But I guess in some ways it does reflect what we were doing with Dio at the time. I didn't just want to sit around and do nothing after I was gone from Sabbath – I had a new band and we were in the studio recording our debut. I suppose in some ways those words do have a resonance. I wanted a powerful song to open the album. Some of the other tracks, like *Don't Talk To Strangers* and *Invisible*, start kinda slowly. I wanted a strong, powerful track at the beginning.

Holy Diver

This was a song I'd written between leaving Sabbath and putting my band together. I went into my little studio, which at that time was nothing more than a room with a Revox in it, and wrote *Holy Diver*. When it came time for us to rehearse in England, where we found Vivian [Campbell] and Jimmy [Bain], luckily that was one of the songs that I could present to them. It was a statement of intent for us at that early stage.

Gypsy

I just wanted to write something that was a little bit, again, harder and stronger. But having said that, *Gypsy* is slower than *Stand Up & Shout* – it's more of a Stones kind of tune.

Caught In The Middle

I wrote that one about our engineer, Angelo Arcuri. He did a lot of the early Dio albums and was also our out-front soundman. He had the propensity of always being caught in the middle. He was always being squeezed in some place. It was more about his personal life. He always seemed to make some really silly decisions that left him in a precarious place.

Don't Talk To Strangers

Is that you whispering the title of the song very softly at the beginning?

Yes, that's me. Live it was Jimmy who always did the whispering. I was able to do it myself initially but after a while I thought, it's only a whisper, Jimmy can handle this. So we gave the chore to Jimmy.

Then you sing the beginning of the song in quite a high voice.

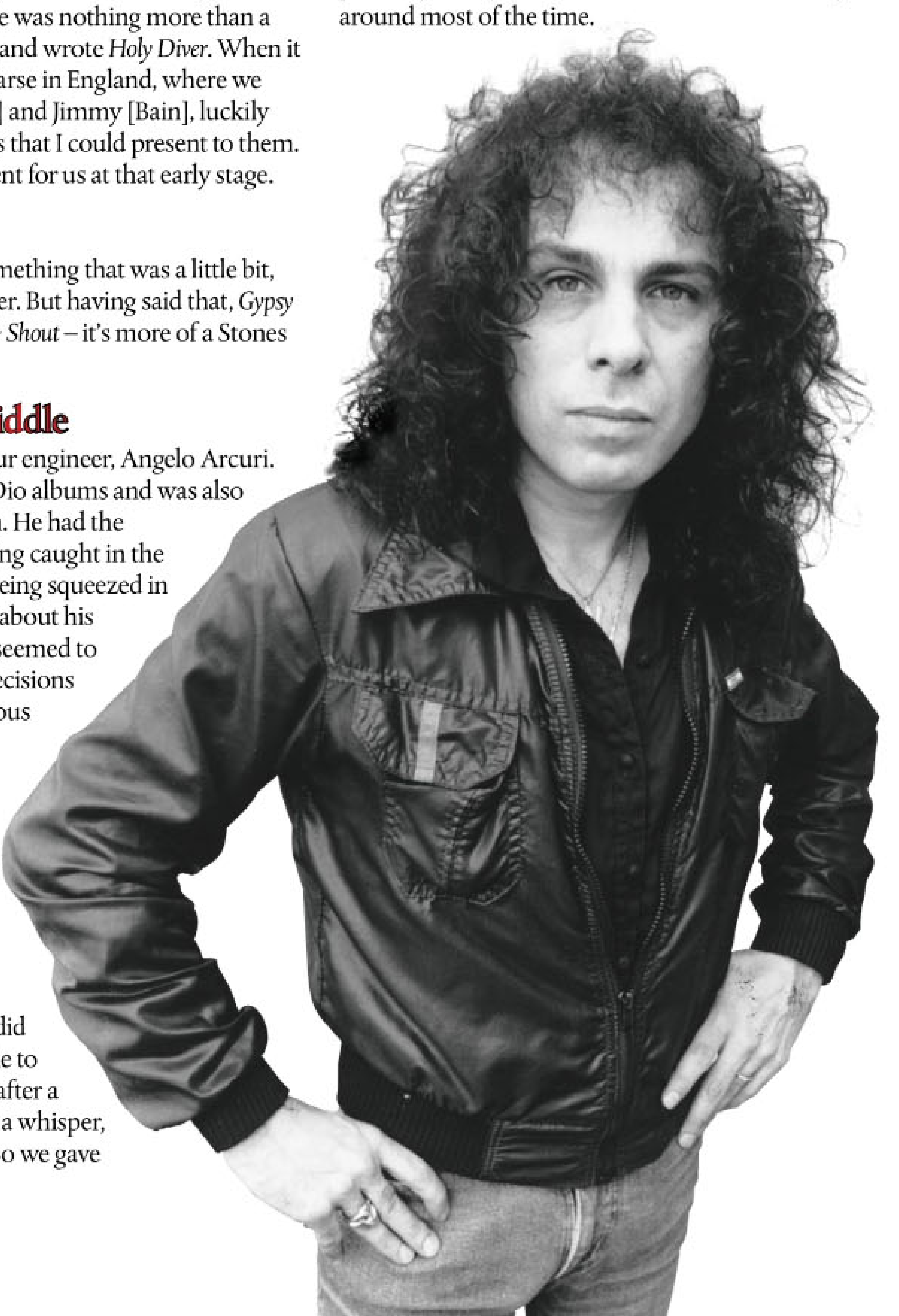
That's just a vocal technique, really. It was meant for texture purposes. I sang like a girl, I guess.

Talking about girls, there's the decidedly unromantic lyric: *'Don't dream of women, 'cause they only bring you down'*.

That's pretty true if you think about all the broken hearts strewn across the world. The point I was trying to make is that if you're in a man-woman relationship, you don't want your partner to be a stranger.

Straight Through The Heart

Riff written by Jimmy. I love the riff. A lot of these songs have my feelings in them, because maybe things weren't going so well in my personal life. Relationships are very, very difficult, especially the ones that are man-woman related. The man always feels he's the one that's getting it in the heart. Which is probably totally untrue, I'm sure it's the other way around most of the time.



Invisible

***Invisible* always reminds us of an Ozzy Osbourne ballad at the beginning, before it gathers steam.**

I think you're going to have be relegated for that comment. You're in the first division now. Nothing that we did on this album was Black Sabbath-oriented at all. I just can't see Ozzy singing that song. Not at all. Had I written it for him I don't think he would've been able to do it.

There's a lyric that goes: *'She had 14 years of teenage tears'*. How's that possible?

I see your point. It's just alluding to the fact that the teenage years are your most difficult, because you have to learn how to do deal with yourself, and your body, and your mind. The number count is completely erroneous and I own up to that.

Rainbow In The Dark

One of the album's stand-out tracks, but it very nearly didn't make it on to the record.

I felt *Rainbow In The Dark* was too poppy compared with the rest of the songs. I was about to take a razor blade to the tape – because we used tape in those days, of course – and luckily for me the lads talked me out of it. Thank god they did.

Did you dislike the song because of its squeaky keyboard theme?

I think that was probably why I didn't like it so much. It just seemed so calliope-like, so fairground-like to me. But in retrospect its singularity made it memorable. At the end of the day the keyboard theme was the perfect foil to the overall heaviness of that song.

Shame On The Night

Tell us about all that howling at the start.

It's the sound effect of a wolf.

So it wasn't you squeezing Jimmy Bain's balls?

I tried to stay away from Jimmy's balls as much as possible. As any sane person would. But talking about sound effects, on *Invisible*, the track we mentioned before, at the beginning of it you'll hear a kind of whooshing sound – as if someone has just disappeared. We tried for ages to get that sound and in the end we brought in a spare tyre from someone's car. We jiggled with the valve until it made that escaping-air sound.

One of our fave lyrics is on *Shame On The Night*: *'Shame on the sun/For you the light you sold'*. It's a neat twist on the song's title.

Well, I'm noted for that kind of thing, for saying things that don't make a whole lot of sense at the time. But then people read into them and realise that in some convoluted way they do make some sense. I like that song very much and that lyric as well.

GETTY

CLASSIC ROCK'S DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GUNS N' ROSES

Covering the past and continuing adventures of Guns N' Roses, this bookazine from the makers of Classic Rock magazine reveals the true story of the band's hit-making and decade-spanning career by the people who were there

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Mötley Crüe: the new, heavily made-up, MTV-friendly face of metal.

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THE MAINSTREAM

Metal couldn't stay underground for long…

WORDS: PHILIP WILDING

There was a moment in the mid- to late-80s when you couldn't turn on MTV without being bombarded with someone in spandex or leather trousers gurning into the camera and thrusting their guitar down the lens, before a quick cut to some young lady, usually in her pants, gyrating against a pole, an amplifier stack or said gurning musician. It was the 80s and metal ruled the world, the airwaves and the coke-addled brains of video directors.

Metal had come a long way since the days of Sabbath and Steppenwolf. NWOBHM had broke big while still keeping true to its roots and now those that had survived it had been washed up on the beach of decadence and depravity that was known (briefly) as the musical mainstream.

You could blame NWOBHM, you could almost certainly blame Van Halen. VH blew up at the same time as punk and by the mid-80s had coalesced into some mythical juggernaut of spectacle and bombast typified by their grandstanding videos, singer Diamond Dave's inability to button up his shirt or shut his mouth and that fact that they tended to play outside of the USA less often than we hold the Olympics.

This side of the water we had the equally inflexible Motörhead who turned heads and made radios rattle with the number one live album, *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith*. (A number one *live* album, imagine.) Maiden were crossing over in the States, though not quite at the same rate as Def Leppard who managed to change the musical landscape in the US with their *Pyromania* album and never really stopped. By the time of *Hysteria* they'd broken most gig attendance and sales records in living memory.

Not to be left behind, Rob Halford dyed his hair blonde and Glenn Tipton shagged his, so that Judas Priest might run riot across the US with their landmark *Screaming For Vengeance* record.

But the US had finally worked out how to make money out of this metal lark. LA's Sunset Strip was embracing the excesses and glamour of bands like Kiss and Van Halen. A crazy mix of make-up, hairspray, 70s glam, sleazy punk, lightweight pop production techniques and MTV were about to take a generation of bands into the charts.

Quiet Riot knocked The Police from the top of the US charts with their *Metal Health* album, while their appearance at the US Festival in 1983, alongside Mötley Crüe, Ozzy, the ubiquitous Van Halen, Scorpions, Judas Priest and a fledgling, and very lippy, Mötley Crüe helped it become the hot ticket of the three day event.

By 1984, Metal was taking a 20% share of all recordings sold in the US, though that would wither in comparison to the mid-80s when bands like Warrant, Ratt and Poison were being taken seriously and Bon Jovi and Mötley Crüe went stratospheric. Europe took over the world, and proved that the poodle perm was still a force to be reckoned with, albeit briefly, with *The Final Countdown*, though 1987 would plateau and tip with the release of *Appetite For Destruction*. As brilliant and unrefined as it was, it would be the death knell for the Sunset Strip and a period when lip-gloss was an acceptable option in a photo shoot. Bands like Winger and Skid Row plodded on, but the following year Jane's Addiction released *Nothing's Shocking* and while it rocked and rolled, there wasn't a bandana in sight, and, as if without warning, the mainstream was suddenly shifting again, an audience's gaze planted forever elsewhere. Grunge was coming. And metal was about to explode into a million little pieces…

THE SONGS THAT FORGED METAL

HAIR METAL ANTHEMS

Words: Sleazegrinder

Van Halen: stumbled on to the hair metal party.

ROCK N' ROLL ALL NITE
KISS *(1975)*

Released a decade before hair metal hit the ground running, this song is basically the entire hair metal movement summed-up in two and a half glorious minutes of street-savvy glitter rock. From Kiss's third album, 1975's *Dressed to Kill*, it's almost impossible to imagine that this song wasn't always a hit or even that actual flesh and blood humans wrote it; it still sounds like it had always existed. *Rock n' Roll All Nite* is perhaps the closest thing hair metal has to holy scripture. We must all obey its weighty words.

LIVE WIRE
MÖTLEY CRÜE *(1981)*

There are late 70s precedents you could point to if you really wanted to get technical about it, but let's face it, this 1981 banger is the mother of all hair metal anthems. Sure, Mötley Crüe would go on to become one of the biggest rock/metal bands on the planet, but their *Too Fast For Love* incarnation was so weird, so off-kilter, so raw and immediate that it almost seems like a different band completely than the tattooed millionaires who created *Girls Girls Girls*. On this, the opener of their outta-nowhere debut, Mick Mars presents us with one of the most self-assuredly ugly guitar sounds of all time, pure punk, just a mean-spirited grunt, really. The whole affair sounds rushed, like a one-take wonder that just happened to change rock n'roll forever. *Live Wire* is the greatest punk-slash-deathrock-slash-glitterrock anthem of all-time. Pure lightning in a bottle. Rock'n'roll made dangerous again.

CRAZY TRAIN
OZZY OSBOURNE *(1980)*

Sure, this made it into the last list – but it's worth considering *Crazy Train* in terms of the impact it had on 80s metal. When Ozzy stumbled out of Black Sabbath in 1979 under a fog of alcohol, most metal fans figured that was it, he'd check into a motel room somewhere and drink his liver to death. And that's basically what he did for the next couple years. But then he pulled off the most remarkable comeback probably in the history of rock n' roll. Picking up whiz-kid guitarist Randy Rhoads from the splinters of Quiet Riot, Ozzy reinvented himself as the godfather of hair metal, producing two landmark albums in rapid succession to prove it. *Crazy Train*'s signature riff is so iconic that literally everyone you know knows it, could identify it in three seconds or less, and will tell you it's a damn good tune. And it is. The fact that Rhoads died before he could see what a lasting impact it had on heavy metal is a shame, but holy smokes, what a fucking song.

Bon Jovi: an unbeatable comboination of looks and hooks.

ROCK OF AGES
DEF LEPPARD *(1983)*

If we'd done these in order, this would be number one. While 1987's *Hysteria* would ultimately become Def Lep's biggest selling album, *Pyromania* is the one that broke them into worldwide superstardom, largely because of this song. An endless build-up into an orgy of sticky-sweet screamalong choruses – or maybe the whole thing is the chorus, it's hard to tell – *Rock of Ages* hit every rock fan in just the right place, and at just the right time. The first 20 seconds – cowbell, a snicker, the glooben-globbin – is so heroically cavalier that you have already been won over before that gorgeously perfect riff even kicks in. The result of a madman (producer Mutt Lange) tinkering with Lep's sound on an almost sub-atomic level until every second was absolutely and unmistakably right and true, this is the greatest thing that hair metal ever produced. If your friends don't like this song, ditch them. If your girl/boyfriend doesn't like this song, break up with them. I don't care who you are, this is your anthem. God didn't give rock n' roll to you, man. Def Leppard did.

METAL HEALTH
QUIET RIOT *(1983)*

If you weren'tt there at the time, it is impossible to adequately explain the impact this song had on pop culture in 1983. It was literally everywhere. Before *Metal Health*, heavy metal was the stuff of teenage dirtbags, the short-bus cousin to punk. After *Metal Health*, everybody you ever met was suddenly a metalhead, and the sound of blazing riffage ruled the kingdom for the rest of the decade. For most people, Quiet Riot had seemingly come up from nowhere, but the band had been in operation for a decade already and had previously boasted Ozzy's greatest fret-handler Randy Rhoads in its ranks. Fuelled by early 70s glam and the loudmouth razzmatazz of it's flamboyant frontman Kevin Dubrow, Quiet Riot had been honed and polished for years by the time they got their big break. Their stranglehold on the charts was brief and the backlash was brutal, but for one glorious summer, Quiet Riot taught us all to bang our heads, and we could not get enough.

TURN UP THE RADIO
AUTOGRAPH *(1984)*

The lightweight, frivolous flipside to gnarly flash metal like GN'R or Mötley Crüe, Autograph were a radio-friendly throwback to late 70s glammy hard-rock acts like Angel or Y&T. Formed in Pasadena in 1983 by

guitarist/vocalist Steve Plunkett, Autograph were never, for a moment, cool. They really weren't. They were sponsored by a pen company, for chrissakes. But their drummer was buds with David Lee Roth, and by the mid 80s everyone with long hair got a record contract, and so it went for Autograph. Debut album, *Sign In Please* (ugh, the pen metaphors!) initially tanked, but then this annoyingly irresistible ear-worm took hold on rock radio and shot them into platinum status. It didn't last, but let's give 'em their moment in the sun. A great song and a great ode to a great medium that grows dimmer every day.

PANAMA

VAN HALEN *(1984)*

Van Halen were a 70s rock band that stumbled into the hair metal party and proceeded to wipe the floor with the half-wit kids aping their moves. If anybody knew how to command an arena full of sex-crazed adolescents, it was David Lee Roth, and Eddie's pyrotechnic guitar playing was so far ahead of the competition at this point that *Panama* sounds like it was created by an entirely different species. Who cares what *Panama* was actually about – drugs? A stripper? A car? – it feels like the still-throbbing heart of Saturday night, and as time rolls on and hairlines recede into the ether, *Panama* has remained as potent and life-affirming as it did in 1984.

ROUND AND ROUND

RATT *(1984)*

No band exemplified the hedonistic pleasures of hair metal as effortlessly as Ratt did. They were hard and sleazy enough for hardcore rock n' roll types, but they wore enough make-up and threw in enough pop hooks to reel in mainstream fans as well. They had a charismatic frontman, a great sense of humour, and for a good few years, a seemingly endless well of radio-baiting hit songs. *Round And Round*, from their '84 debut, was their first and biggest single, scraping the top 10 in the US and propelling them from 70s leftovers to the next big thing seemingly overnight. It remains one of the most recognisable and still-welcome songs of the entire era.

ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE

SCORPIONS *(1984)*

The Scorps were doin' just fine already, plying their twin-guitar Euro-metal to hordes of headbangers the world over. In fact, they had already reinvented themselves a few times already, from hippie space-prog rockers in the early 70s to envelope-pushing hard rock provocateurs 10 years later. 1984's *Love At First Sting* was not a radical departure from their monolithic '82 masterpiece *Blackout*, but it did take a more commercial approach to their Teutonic riff-mongering. The end result was a platinum selling monster anchored by this near-perfect ode to all-that-is-heavy. The over the top video, featuring the band playing inside a flimsy cage that threatens to be overrun by rabid female fans at any moment, certainly didn't hurt.

GETTY IMAGES X3

WE'RE NOT GONNA TAKE IT

TWISTED SISTER *(1984)*

The video for this song was such a cultural phenomenon, it propelled Dee Snider from obscure metal singer to America's second-favourite cross dresser (next to Boy George). A classic tale of boyhood rebellion set to snarly boot-stomp glam, *We're Not Gonna Take It* was a masterpiece of kitsch, as tacky and as ridiculous as you could hope from a bunch of gnarly New York bruisers dressed in shredded house-dresses, and so catchy it would not leave your head – or the radio – for years, maybe forever. From their seminal, multi-platinum *Stay Hungry* album, unleashed on a metal-mad world in 1984.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

EUROPE *(1986)*

To understand how this song became such a runaway hit the world over, you have to remember that most people in the 80s felt like there was at least a decent chance that we'd all die in a nuclear war before we ever got to the 1990s. Ronald Reagan was the leader of the free world, and he was a war-baiting maniac. So Europe, an unassuming Swedish melodic pop-metal band, wrote a song about the end of the world as we know it, full of piping organs and rippin' guitar solos, and we all loved it. That's how unstable we were. If you were born too late for the 80s, you should count your fucking blessings.

SHAKE ME

CINDERELLA *(1986)*

Shake Me wasn't much of a hit when Cinderella's debut, *Night Songs*, hit the shelves in 1986. The mushy power-ballad *Nobody's Fool* moved a lot more units. But it remains one of the best roof-rattling anthems of the era, cementing Cinderella's place as one of the most authentically rock n' roll bands of the glam wave. As time rolled on their blues influences came to the forefront and the frilly frocks were more of an afterthought, but at this point in their career, you got the whole package – hair piled to the ceiling and searing, blooze-powered hard rock.

Kiss: 'the closest thing hair metal has to holy scripture'.

LIVIN' ON A PRAYER

BON JOVI *(1986)*

Has there ever been a man more suited to the job of rock star than Jon Bon Jovi? His band of working-class Jersey dudes propelled hair metal into the stratosphere with a combination of looks and hooks that were thoroughly unbeatable, and this one – an uplifting tale of small-town lovers with lyrics worthy of Springsteen – was their magnum opus. A video featuring ol' Jon-Bon flying around an arena on a harness to the delight of thousands, mostly lips-licking girls, put it all right over the top. Sure, it was a stretch to throw these puffballs into the metal category, but it was the 80s, man. Everything was metal.

HERE I GO AGAIN

WHITESNAKE *(1987)*

Talk about right place, right time. Whitesnake were a mid-level 70s hard rock band formed by David Coverdale after leaving Deep Purple, and he probably didn't have any aspirations to be glam anything. But midway through their gradual transformation from Zep-alikes to more radio-friendly rock n' roll, hair metal hit like a hammerblow and the still youthful-looking thirty-something Coverdale found himself in the midst of a brand new career as the Robert Plant of the hairspray set. And here's the thing: he fucking nailed, it man. A lot of hair metal hits have aged terribly, full of artificial drum sounds, embarrassingly juvenile lyrics and dodgy musicianship. Not Whitesnake's. Time has only strengthened their legacy and songs like *Here I Go Again* sound positively regal in comparison to plastic-fantastic hits from the same era by goons like Danger Danger or the Bulletboys. And has there every been an opening line as great as '*I don't know where I'm going, but I sure know where I've been?*' There has not.

RATT TRAP

With the Mötley Crüe reunion and nostalgia for 80s metal at a peak, **Ratt** are one band that won't be reforming. Yet, between 1984 and '86, they were the band who battled Nikki Sixx and friends for cover stories, chart positions and spots on MTV. *Classic Rock* speaks to the band ruled – and destroyed – by the "the Three Ps – pussy, party and paycheck".

WORDS: GREG PRATO. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY MITCH LAFON

Ratt's world is a turbulent one – in 2005 it's unclear who exactly is entitled to the 'Ratt' name. Is it singer Stephen Pearcy (who tours as Stephen Pearcy & The Rat Bastards), or guitarist Warren DeMartini and drummer Bobby Blotzer (who tour as Ratt, with replacement, non-original members)? Add to that the fact that one of their most identifiable members, guitarist Robbin Crosby, died in 2002, while bassist Juan Croucier is out of the picture entirely, and it's a mini-series waiting to happen.

But 23 years ago it was a different story. Hollywood's Sunset Strip was a punk rock haven in the late 70s/early 80s, but by the time 1982 rolled around, one-time Strip regulars Van Halen had inspired a legion of bands. "It was crazy, anything went," remembers Pearcy today. "People were fucking and pissing and partying and drinking. It was like that Doors movie, but it was in the early 80s."

The soundtrack to this hedonism was supplied by bands that would go on to spearhead the glam/pop metal scene: Mötley Crüe, Quiet Riot, WASP, Stryper and Great White. And one called Mickey Ratt.

San Diego native Pearcy recalls stumbling upon a then-unknown band, which changed his life. "I used to travel up [to LA], and got to meet Van Halen before they got signed. I used to sit on the stage at the Whiskey A-Go-Go when Van Halen played in front of 18 people. I'd be shitting my pants, thinking: 'This is crazy, I have to tell my friends.' But nobody believed me that there was a new thing. I said: 'I'm going to LA.'" Soon after, Mickey Ratt were born.

But Mickey Ratt's initial members failed to match Pearcy's desire to – as Kiss would have it – rock'n'roll all nite and party every day, as bandmates came and went, including guitarist Jake E Lee. "Jake was in the band for nearly a year; he was getting noticed as we were getting noticed. Dio auditioned him, then Ozzy auditioned him."

Knowing that he needed a six-string hero to launch the

Curls, curls, curls: Ratt bassist Juan Croucier.

GETTY X2

King Ratts: Warren DeMartini (left) and Stephen Pearcy.

DE VIVRE
TROP JEUNE DE MOURIRE
RATT

➳ group, Pearcy tracked down another San Diego musician, Warren DeMartini. Soon after, mutual friend Robbin Crosby joined as second guitarist, and through the local musicians' grapevine the line-up was completed with bassist Juan Croucier and drummer Bobby Blotzer. Mickey Ratt were now simply known as Ratt.

Blotzer recalls "hunger, lack of food, fire in our veins – a lot of fun and good times" and "a lot of camaraderie going on" with other bands. But one particular group stuck out among all the party animals: Metallica. Blotzer not-so-fondly remembers sharing a stage with Lars Ulrich and friends.

"I remember Metallica opening for us in some church in Pasadena," he says. "It wasn't an active church any more; they were using it for shows. Metallica always had an attitude like they were better than everybody else. I didn't get their trip then. We were trying to write catchy 'airplay' songs that still had a rough edge. They were playing the shit that we wouldn't want to play – over-riffing and not catchy. But who's got the last laugh?"

With their peers getting signed, Ratt felt left out in the cold. Quickly, they devised a plan – record an indie EP in hopes of attracting the major labels. But friction was never far away. DeMartini: "When you rehearse all week, you get up on stage and someone is wasted on Jack Daniel's, it's easy to blame 'that guy'." DeMartini exited briefly, before Crosby convinced him to reconsider.

This also proved to be a tricky time for Croucier, who was under contract with Q Prime Management to play bass in Dokken. "[Q Prime] had me on small salary – I was a starving musician. It came down to deep soul-searching. I'd rather be happy and be in Ratt than be miserable and have a deal with Dokken. I chose Ratt."

Your dad: "Is that a boy or a girl? You can't tell these days... grumble , grumble, etc..."

Recorded in two days, Ratt's self-titled EP created a buzz when a local LA radio station picked it up. "KLOS had a show called *Local Licks* and they played *You Think You're Tough*," says DeMartini. "That led to Atlantic coming down."

With a showcase set for July 27, 1983 at the Beverly Theater, Ratt delivered. Blotzer: "It was like one of those stories that you hear about where all these labels are backstage, and they're all jockeying to get into the dressing room. Doug Morris, the president of Atlantic, made it in. We got the deal that night."

With a label now in place, Ratt got to work on their full-length debut album with producer Beau Hill. Pearcy: "All I remember is having a great time – fucking chicks in the lobby." While the resulting record, 1984's *Out Of The Cellar*, contained several subsequent Ratt staples – *Wanted Man*, *Back For More* – there was one song in particular that would break the band. "When Beau heard *Round & Round* he said: 'What's this?' We're like: 'I don't know, it's not really tight.' Beau's like: 'We're going to make it tight.' The next thing you know, it's the single," recalls Pearcy.

DeMartini: "We did all the things to assemble [the album], then there was this calm before the storm. For six or eight months… nothing. Out of the blue, we got a call that we were going to make a video. It just exploded. We were doing our own club tour, and then we got on a national tour."

Pop metal was all the rage during the summer of 1984, as Van Halen, Mötley Crüe, Quiet Riot and Twisted Sister were all over MTV. Ratt thrived under this rock-friendly climate, as the Don Letts-directed *Round & Round* video and a tour supporting Ozzy Osbourne catapulted *Out Of The Cellar* into the US Top 10.

In addition to all the attention they were getting at home, Ratt were massive in Japan. "It was just like the films you see of The Beatles," says Blotzer. "We couldn't get out of the hotel. It was true rock stardom."

"THE THREE Ps – PUSSY, PARTY, PAYCHECK. I LIVE BY THAT MOTTO TO THIS DAY." – STEPHEN PEARCY

While the others were enjoying the wave of success, Pearcy looked beyond. "We wanted big parties, big money, big everything." As a result, the singer developed his own philosophy. "The Three Ps – pussy, party, paycheck. I live by that motto to this day."

After the tour ended, Ratt regrouped in Maui to write their second album. But the good vibes quickly turned sour for Robbin Crosby. Music writer Mitch Lafon spoke to Crosby shortly before he died. "Everybody got their own little room, or condo, but that was the beginning of the end," Crosby said. "Everybody took their girlfriends, wives and kids, but in my opinion it was a time to work.

"Everybody was doing their own thing. We were supposed to write together, but Warren had his wife and a new baby that he hadn't seen in months. It was the same for Juan. Stephen had his own place. I just remember feeling really alone. Nobody ever came over to my place. We all wanted to get some time off but if we went surfing or fucked around, the manager was saying: 'When are you guys going to get together and write?'"

Released in 1985, Ratt's second album *Invasion Of Your Privacy* was another American Top 10 hit on the strength of tracks such as *Lay It Down* and *You're In Love*. But the group's musical approach was changing, and they were beginning to favour pop gloss over their early raw-and-rocking approach.

Invasion Of Your Privacy established Ratt as a major US concert draw (especially when teamed with a pre-*Slippery When Wet* Bon Jovi).

Shake, Ratt-le and roll: (l to r) Warren DeMartini, Bobby Blotzer, Stephen Pearcy, Juan Croucier and Robbin Crosby.

STRIP TEASE

How the members of two of the biggest LA bands of the 80s ruled Sunset Strip.

"In the early days, Nikki [Sixx, Mötley Crüe bassist] used to come and see Mickey Ratt, and we became friends," explains Ratt singer Stephen Pearcy. "They were trolling the Strip - needing food and housing - just like me. I had 'Ratt Mansion West' - it was a one-bedroom apartment in Palms, a few miles from the Strip. We used to hang out and we made a gang. We called ourselves The Gladiators. We found girls to take us home, feed us and do whatever to survive. Nikki was 'Nikki Leader Sixx', Robbin was 'King Crosby', I was 'Ratt Patrol Leader', Tommy [Lee, Mötley drummer] was 'Sergeant In Arms'. We all looked after each other and made sure everybody partied hard."

Bobby Blotzer also recalls hangin' with the Crüe. "I used to dirt-bike with Tommy and Vince [Neil]. My ex-wife and I, and Tommy and Heather [Locklear, Lee's ex-wife], used to go on trips together. We would go out and just fucking dominate any club or wherever we went."

The Crüe connection also ran deep for Juan Croucier. "Mick Mars [Mötley guitarist] and I were going to start a band. We're sitting in my apartment, talking about band names, and he goes: 'I got a name for you: Motley Crew.' He said he was watching a documentary on The Beatles, and they were interviewing this little old lady in Hamburg. They asked her about The Beatles and she said: 'They're a motley crew, aren't they?' I saw him about two weeks later. He goes: 'I just auditioned with this guy, Nikki Sixx...'"

Additionally, Robbin Crosby had formed a bad drug habit with Sixx. "Nikki Sixx and I had gotten into the heroin thing together. He was supposed to be the best man at my wedding and he didn't come, because there were going to be people drinking. That was when he had just gone through his rehab thing."

Blotzer, for one, enjoyed the lifestyle: "Sold out, a lot of money, hot chicks. Young and fucking rich was a good way to be. After *Out Of The Cellar*, I bought a new car and house. After *Invasion Of Your Privacy*, I bought everybody in my family cars and my mom a house."

Like most successful 80s groups, Ratt weren't immune to the trappings of stardom. "You had big everything. Big drugs, big money, big parties. And it's all free, the more the merrier. Heroin, booze, blow – it was everywhere," recalls Pearcy. "Me, I always went towards the pussy and the paycheck."

Blotzer remembers that drugs weren't really a problem. "The problem was getting them, like when were in places like Montana!" he laughs. "We snorted blow and drank, smoked weed. But then, everybody snorted blow – you'd snort blow so you could drink longer."

DeMartini admits not learning from others' mistakes. "Everybody ignored what happened to our heroes in the 60s. It was a free-for-all."

While the other Ratt members appeared to be able to handle their vices, Robbin Crosby went off the rails. "I met my wife [*Playboy* model Laurie Carr] at the very end of the *Invasion Of Your Privacy* tour," he said. "When I got home I was really burned out, so I started smoking heroin. That became a ritual. I was doing a couple of hundred bucks a day. I just liked the way it made me feel better and I didn't get all drunk and hungover. I thought it was great. I went through the whole 'it's not going to happen to me' and 'I can handle it' thing."

Ratt were rapidly becoming part of the pop metal elite but the band blundered while preparing 1986's *Dancing Undercover*. "We weren't even ready," says Blotzer. "Our manager supposedly put down some deposit on a studio that we'd lose if we didn't go ahead. We were in rehearsal with just a handful of ideas – Pearcy never showed up. It ended up being okay and it sold well, but for me, side two I can't even hear because of Stephen's lyrics."

Alleged shady dealings also hampered the recording. Croucier: "I realised our producer, Beau Hill, didn't care about Ratt – he cared about making money. He told us: 'Be at the studio at 9am sharp, and I'm going to leave at 6pm. If you guys aren't here, we aren't going to make the record.' Subsequently, I came to find out that he was recording vocal tracks for Fiona Flanagan [New Jersey-born songstress and Hill's girlfriend], on Ratt's dime, after Ratt had left the studio."

Still, MTV backed *Dancing Undercover* – especially *Dance*, *Body Talk* and *Slip Of The Lip*. And the resulting tour was pretty successful, as power pop veterans Cheap Trick and a fast-rising Poison opened for Ratt, resulting in strong ticket sales.

On Ratt's next release, 1988's *Reach For The Sky*, a union with ex-Queen producer Mike Stone seemed promising. However, Stone was fired before the sessions wrapped and Beau Hill was reinstated.

"It fell short again," shrugs DeMartini. "I liked working with Mike Stone but that record started out one way and finished another." Pearcy agrees that the album marked "a weird time – everybody was into their own worlds".

Crosby recalled that even the tour rehearsals were stressful. "For live shows, [Stephen] rarely sang in rehearsals. He'd show up a week before and maybe make it through a set and then that was that." And it didn't get any better for Crosby once the tour began. "I'd never use on tour. I'd just go cold turkey and the first couple of weeks were kind of a drag, but the *Reach For The Sky* tour was difficult for me 'cause I got strung out from all that time off."

Despite the album not being up to scratch, the Aerosmith-esque *Way Cool Jr* enjoyed significant radio airplay, and a career highpoint occurred – a gig at Japan's Tokyo Dome. "We played New Year's Eve with Bon Jovi," remembers Pearcy. "It was the craziest show ever – like 80,000 people indoors. You're looking at dots and the stage is like 50-feet high." Blotzer remembers it for other reasons: "We did five dates, and got paid like a million dollars."

For 1990's *Detonator*, Ratt had some songwriting help from Desmond Child and Diane Warren. However, changing musical tastes couldn't be ignored. DeMartini: "If we had done [*Detonator*] when *Dancing Undercover* or *Reach For The Sky* came out, it would have fared better. The genre had changed so much – as good as *Detonator* was, it was kind of an anachronism."

Croucier had other ideas for the album. "I wanted to go back to the spirit of the indie EP we did at the beginning of our career. Lose the big production, and get right back in your face. Someone said to our manager: 'How about if we get someone like… Desmond Child?' Which was the last thing I wanted to do."

Blotzer remains unimpressed with the genre that caused Ratt's career to stutter to a halt. "By and large, I didn't really like grunge," he admits. "I thought Nirvana had a handful of good songs, but to this day, I hear *Nevermind*, and after four or five songs, I've had enough. I didn't think grunge had anywhere near the staying power that our genre – hard rock/metal – had. But it definitely put us all out of business."

As if changing musical tastes weren't detrimental enough to Ratt, Crosby's addiction was getting worse. "I didn't know Robbin was taking heroin," claims Blotzer. "He went to rehab, came out, we toured Japan, then he relapsed. He was really out of it. Going on tour was not going to help his plight. He couldn't be around that atmosphere and stay clean."

It was obvious to Croucier that his friend was quickly becoming a drug casualty. "What was affected the most was his creativity," Croucier recalls. "He started withdrawing from the band and isolating himself. There became an issue between Warren and Robbin about the guitar work – Warren wanted to

GETTY X3

➔ play more lead. Robbin's feelings were really hurt by that. It launched him into a depression and more drug abuse."

With Michael Schenker taking Crosby's spot, the tension increased. "We weren't selling tickets like normal," states Blotzer. "We'd be at a 12,000-seater with 5,000 people there – it was wearing on everybody's nerves. We were fighting within the band – it was a shitty tour." Shortly after the 1991 collection, *Ratt & Roll 81-91*, Pearcy exited, spelling Ratt's first break-up.

From a business standpoint, it was the worst time to split. "It put us in a world of shit, because we had already taken an advance from Atlantic on a record that never got made," Blotzer fumes. "We owed a lot of money from a merchandise advance we took for the *Detonator* tour. Only a quarter of that was paid back, and we took a million bucks. We were all on the hook for about $150,000 we had to pay back. Typical Pearcy move – doesn't care about anybody but himself." Soon, lawsuits were flying.

While the others were able to fend for themselves, Crosby was the worst off. Croucier: "He got the old 'one-two rock'n'roll punch'. He loses the band, and out the door goes the old wife. She files for divorce, and they held his feet over the fire. His bankruptcy had to do with his personal thing following his divorce. I'm sure the Ratt problems didn't help."

Later in the 90s, reunion talk began. But the others soon realised Crosby was in no shape to tour, as he had contracted AIDS from intravenous drug use, gained weight from a thyroid condition and was bedridden for extended periods. Crosby broke his silence shortly before his death. "I have full-blown AIDS. Basically, it's killing me," he revealed. "I've got a terminal disease. Recently, I went in for surgery 'cause my back hurt so bad, and they got all this infectious fluid out. Then they found that my bones were not getting oxygen under the infectious fluid [a condition known as osteomyelitis]. I've been in the hospital for eight straight months and in and out for over seven years."

Without Crosby present and with Croucier opting out ("Nothing had changed with Stephen – he was still drinking heavily, very stubborn, just a tense situation"), Pearcy, DeMartini and Blotzer relaunched Ratt. The trio compiled an album of unused tunes, 1997's *Collage*, and hit the road – eventually releasing a 1999 self-titled album on the Portrait label. "Bobby, Stephen and Warren decided [Robbin] wasn't going to be in the band," recalls Croucier. "But they didn't so much as call him to tell him. So Robbin was really upset about that. His disease became worse – eventually they put him in a hospice."

On June 6, 2002, Crosby died at the age of 41. "All of his friends abandoned him," says Croucier. "The truth is that he was furious with the guys from Ratt, because they hadn't shown any interest until the last maybe six months of his life. That's what he told me. Which is really sad because he loved those guys."

But before Crosby died, Pearcy was no longer seeing eye to eye with the others. "I told the other guys: 'Stop. We have to take a step back. People aren't showing up. There's no single, no video, no development – it's a brick wall.' They wanted to go to Japan. I said: 'I ain't payin' for my own trip. I'm going to take a break.' They said: 'We're going to grab a new singer.' I went: 'Well, don't forget that I have major interests in both entities.' Long story short – went to court, they sued, I tried to get them back, and they got away with making the courts believe [otherwise]."

Stephen Pearcy: toured as Ratt until 2014.

DeMartini's account of what happened differs. "The final leg of the tour was booked. Then we had a falling-out and Stephen decided to leave the band, start a solo band and go on the road with that. We learned through the testimony in this trial he was already working on the solo thing when he assembled the tour. We could have just taken a break. I never understood why he insisted that we book a Ratt tour, and then at the same time start working on a solo thing. Anyway, he quit the band and the tour had to be cancelled. He went on the road with a solo band, so we got a new singer and continued."

Continue they did. DeMartini and Blotzer toured this summer with ex-Love/Hate singer Jizzy Pearl on the Rock Never Stops tour alongside Cinderella, Quiet Riot and Firehouse. Pearcy was also busy this summer, touring as part of American Metal Blast 2005 with WASP, LA Guns and Metal Church. Additionally, Pearcy recently released several albums, including *Fueler* and *Rat* (sic) *Attack*, and Croucier is readying *Demos From The Ratt Years*.

Despite all the lawsuits, there was an attempt to unite Pearcy, DeMartini, Blotzer and Croucier. Blotzer: "[Pearcy] tried to get this thing back together, but his terms were asinine beyond belief. He sent some nutty email stating he wants half the merchandise, he wants to manage, produce, call all the shots. It was a joke. Stephen badly needs counselling in my opinion."

On the other side, Pearcy offers a different take. "I made a proposal to them. 'These are mostly my songs, it's my band down to the logo. I propose an album and a tour.' DeMartini shot it down, and I said: 'Okay, I can see you're staying true to your destruction of this band.' It would have given the fans a 20-year anniversary record and a tour, like Mötley Crüe, actually before the Mötley thing was exposed. So they dropped the ball on that, and actually put an end to Ratt."

Croucier, on the other hand, doesn't agree with either side. "I'm embarrassed by Bobby and Warren calling themselves Ratt. It's not Ratt. Three-fifths of the guys are gone; the guys who did most of the writing are no longer in the band. I can understand they need to make money, but to take the name and abuse it doesn't seem like a respectful and intelligent thing to do. Ironically, I know if Stephen had the chance, he'd be out there doing it too. The damage is done at this point."

Looking back before his death, Crosby offered an honest assessment. "I ate, slept and drank rock'n'roll since I was 10 years old, and my dreams have all come true. And then some have been dashed against the rocks, by some people that I didn't even really respect at times."

Robbin Crosby succumbed to AIDS in 2002.

THE POP METAL WARS

If you were an American hairspray rocker in 1985, the Ratt/Bon Jovi arena tour was the place to be. But the bands weren't always so chummy...

"We had played some shows with Bon Jovi, when we first went out," remembers Ratt drummer Bobby Blotzer. "Our first shows out on the road in '84, we played with them in Portland, Maine and Seattle, Washington. We were going to keep playing with them, then we got the Ozzy tour, so we hightailed it down to San Diego to start the tour with Ozzy. Bon Jovi were shitty to us - they moved their gear way up, we had no stage room when there was plenty of room for them to move back. Shitty attitudes, y'know, 'East Coast versus West Coast.' So when we were headlining an arena tour for '85, and Bon Jovi were offered up, we were like: 'Alright, bring them out - let's get some payback!' They came out, and we were going to show them who did what - their album went gold, and we had multi-platinum status. Quickly though, we became friends, so all that shit went down the tubes. That tour was huge, man. Sold out arenas every night. It was just amazing - crazy."

But for Robbin Crosby, the tour showed that both groups were heading in opposite directions. "Every night, [Bon Jovi] had a great time in their dressing room before the show, but go into our dressing room and everybody is bitching at each other. Every fucking night, Stephen would go out, watch about two seconds of their show and would come back just raging, pissed that Jon Bon Jovi was ripping off his shtick. It was like: 'Stephen, you don't have a schtick to rip off. You're not David Lee Roth. You don't say anything special. You barely know what fucking city we're in. So, what do you mean Jon's stealing your shtick?' It became the feud of the century."

SOUNDGARDEN
LEPPARD
SUPERMASSIVE

★CLASSIC★
ROCK
HIGH VOLTAGE ROCK'N'ROLL

SLASH
50 YEARS OF LED ZEPPELIN
QUEEN
EAGLES

"It's probably going to be more tea and biscuits than Jack Daniel's and heroin."

Remember the 80s? Amazingly, given past 'misdemeanours', touring partners Mötley Crüe's **Nikki Sixx** and Def Leppard's **Joe Elliott** do – and *Classic Rock* is about to get them to compare notes. Buckle up, it's going to be a messy ride.

Words: **Paul Elliott** Portrait: **Kevin Estrada**

Joe Elliott has a theory as to why Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe have survived while so many of their peers fell by the wayside. "We've both been through so much shit and come out the other side,' says the Yorkshireman in characteristically bluff manner. "And we're ten times stronger than when we first started out. It's survival of the fittest."

Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx nods in agreement. The similarities between these two transatlantic rock titans are certainly uncanny. Both bands helped bring hard rock front and centre in the MTV-dominated 80s, shifting a total of 120 million records between them. The flipside is the "shit" that Elliott refers to: the potentially career-ending car smashes (Crüe singer Vince Neil, Leppard drummer Rick Allen), the struggles with drugs and booze (notably Sixx and late Leppard guitarist Steve Clark), and the Year Zero decimation that was grunge.

But they obviously breed 'em tough in Sheffield and Hollywood. More than 30 years after they crawled out of their respective hometowns, Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe remain at the top of the game. And in a move so forehead-slappingly obvious that you can't help wonder why they haven't done it before, they've joined forces for a short-but-sweet six-date tour of the UK and Ireland.

Which is precisely why *Classic Rock* has brought together these two rock'n'roll die-hards for a candid head-to-head – albeit one that takes place on two different continents. Elliott calls in from Newcastle, Australia, the latest stop-off on Def Leppard's current world tour, while Sixx is at his home in Los Angeles. There is much to talk about, not least the secrets of their success, the art of writing songs that girls take their clothes off to, and perhaps most important of all, the choice of backstage entertainment for rock's elder statesmen: heroin, Jack Daniel's or bingo.

Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe touring together – whose idea was it?

Joe: Nikki and I were the big players in that decision. We discussed the idea when I was a guest on Nikki's radio show a year ago.

Nikki: It's like actors. There are only so many A-list actors, and eventually we get to see great actors on screen together. And it was only a matter of time till Mötley and Def Leppard got together. I'm excited, because it's been way too long coming.

Joe: If Nikki is comparing us to great actors, can I be Richard Burton please?

Nikki: I guess that makes me Elizabeth Taylor.

The two bands have shared a stage twice in the past. The first was on September 17, 1983 – the final show of Leppard's *Pyromania* tour.

Joe: Yeah, that was at Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego. We were finishing up our first headlining tour of the States, where we'd gone from opening for Billy Squier to headlining Jack Murphy Stadium, which holds 55,000 people. The support acts were Uriah Heep and Eddie Money and this young band called Mötley Crüe. On that tour I bought my first ever video camera, and I filmed from the side of the stage when the Crüe were playing *Looks That Kill*. I've transferred it to DVD now – I must give you a copy, Nikki.

Nikki: Oh, fuck yeah! I would love to see that.

You also played together at a US festival show in 1999.

Joe: That's right, and I remember taking a friend of mine into Mötley's dressing room so he could get their autographs on his arm and have them tattooed.

What kind of a friend would take someone into Mötley's dressing room?

Nikki: Ha ha ha! Listen, for this guy to have our names tattooed on him – that's serious commitment.

Have you socialised together over the years?

Joe: We've crossed paths in a nightclub now and again, but this will be our first real get-together.

Nikki: It's actually your fault, because you guys should have moved to America a long time ago.

Joe: Well, three of us did. It's just me and Sav [bassist Rick

Nikki Sixx and Joe Elliott: a fine pair of rock'n'roll survivors.

Lipstick and heroin: the Crüe at the height of their powers.

Savage] left, me in Dublin and Sav in England.
Nikki: Yeah, your drummer lives right down the street from me.

Was there ever a rivalry between the bands?
Nikki: No. I always loved Def Leppard. Back in the day before MTV, there wasn't a cool rock station in LA for young bands, so we were out looking for vinyl all the time, and when I got Def Leppard's first album it just jumped out at me. You know, I made a Def Leppard playlist the other day with three songs from the first record on there, and they really sound good. Joe, you really should go and listen to your first record again.
Joe: Yeah, people tell me that all the time. They're always asking, "Are you guys playing *Wasted* tonight?" But we played *Wasted* at Download.

> **"THE COUGAR WITH THE TIT JOB WANTS TO BLOW JOE OR ME AS BAD AS HER 18-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER DOES." NIKKI SIXX**

Did Leppard ever feel threatened by the Crüe?
Joe: It's funny. When we played together at Jack Murphy Stadium in '83 that was our last American gig till *Hysteria* came out in '87. And then we saw the Crüe and Bon Jovi and all these other bands come up. We were watching MTV from Holland, where we were recording *Hysteria*, and I remember thinking, Christ almighty, they've taken our crown and we're never gonna get it back. Of course, Bon Jovi came along and just blew everybody out of the water. And we saw *Home Sweet Home*, which was just a fucking brilliant video. We'd see you guys between Lionel Richie and Madonna…
Nikki: That's a strange image for me – and kinda sexual too.
Joe: I didn't mean it to come across that way. But that just shows how weird the 80s were.

Ten-legged love machine: the Leps in their 80s heyday.

There is one strange similarity between your bands. On December 8, 1984, Mötley Crüe's singer Vince Neil crashed his car while drunk, killing his passenger, Hanoi Rocks drummer Razzle. And 23 days later, on New Year's Eve 1984, Leppard's drummer Rick Allen lost his left arm in a car crash. Looking back, how did you cope with such traumatic events?
Joe: I remember the phone call from our manager Peter Mensch. He said: 'Are you sitting down?' And having seen enough movies, I knew that you don't say that unless somebody has died. But when he said: 'Your drummer's had a car crash and he's lost his arm', there's no way for you to process that information. It doesn't make any sense. I just burst into tears. I thought, for Rick, not being able to play the drums again was probably worse than death – he's going to be this walking corpse that used to be a drummer. But within about eight or nine days, he started telling us: 'I think I've figured out a way around it.' And of course, we all thought it was just the morphine talking. But he was back on a drum kit within three months. It was inspiring.
Nikki: To me, that's one of the most amazing stories ever. The fact that Rick said: 'I've lost my arm but this is my band and I'm gonna play drums again.' And the band did exactly what a family would do. They said: 'We're here, let's do it.' I mean, how fucking insane is rock'n'roll when you have a one-armed drummer? That isn't even possible. It's a miracle, that's what it is.

How did Vince cope after Razzle's death?
Nikki: Vince changed that day. For us, it was kind of hard to grasp that somebody died in a car accident because Vince was drinking. We all drank and drove in the 80s. It's just what we did. We got lit up at home, we jumped in the car, we went down to Hollywood, we drank more, we grabbed a bunch of chicks, we got kicked out of a bar at 2am, we went to a party and then we got ourselves home. But when Razzle was killed, that was the first time we realised there was consequence to this. And it wasn't that you were gonna get in trouble – somebody died. Vince changed that day, and I don't think he's ever changed back. It's something that's embedded in his DNA. I haven't had that experience, so I don't know how to explain it – other than to say that I've seen a man change forever.

Mötley Crüe laid themselves bare in *The Dirt*. Why hasn't there been a tell-all Def Leppard book?
Joe: I can't speak for Nikki, but maybe for the Crüe it was a case of self-therapy to tell the world what happened, whereas we're the English guys that don't wash their laundry in public. In the 80s, both bands did a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but we were the ones that suffered a death through it. Not many people knew that Steve (Clark, guitarist who died in 1991) had the problem that he had until he actually passed away. And then it all came out. When we did our book in 1987 (*Animal Instinct*), we really focused on Rick's recovery. We've never done a second book that covers Steve's decline and eventual death and then us going through the whole grunge nightmare and coming out the other side with a big smile on our faces. We never thought that anybody would be interested in that story. I guess that's why the Crüe did *The Dirt* and we didn't.
Nikki: The stuff in that book, none of it actually happened. We're just good liars.
Joe: Ha ha ha, that's good.
Nikki: I just figured we've got to do something exciting, because it's pretty boring out here in Los Angeles. So we made it all up.
Joe: I did like the Bullwinkle reference to Tommy's old girlfriend. I thought that hilarious.
Nikki: Well that was the only true part in the book. She was definitely a large lady.

Is it a miracle that no member of Mötley Crüe suffered a similar fate to Steve Clark?
Nikki: I don't understand it. We're the most dysfunctional band on the planet. I was talking to Joe recently about the friendship and the family bond in Def Leppard, and we're the opposite. But in a weird way, it's what makes us work. The anxiety and the stress and the drama is what makes the music click, for some fucking reason. There are many other things that I do that are drama-free, but Mötley just doesn't seem to run on that kind of path. I don't know why.

"What made us successful? One word: songs."

But it's been that way from day one. It's just a fucked-up machine, but that's kind of what's neat about it.

What has made Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe so successful?

Nikki: With Def Leppard it's simple. It's one word – songs. Nothing else matters. Those songs have great hooks, and that's it. One thing that Joe and I have 100 per cent in common is the music we grew up with – and make no doubt about it, that music was the best.

Every song was a benchmark. If we wanted to be great songwriters and great musicians, we had to live up to David Bowie, we had to live up to The Rolling Stones and Slade and The Sweet. The bar was set fucking high for us.

Joe: I'm glad Nikki said that, because for us, there was nothing else but the songs. And I've got to say, with the Crüe there's some stellar songs there. But also, they visualised their songs better than we ever did. Their videos just kicked ass. I mean, I loved Bowie, but he was from outer space and we weren't. We were from Sheffield. We grew up watching Bowie and Bolan covered in glitter, and the Crüe took that image to the next level. We didn't have the balls to do that.

Nikki: You guys had some pretty fucking cool videos, so I don't know about that.

Joe: Yeah, they were OK. But you had that tribal gang look. And we weren't from Hollywood, so we were avoiding that. If you were from England, that kind of image could never look right. I don't know if you ever saw a band called Wrathchild, Nikki. They tried to take your look, but they took it a little too far.

Nikki: Yeah, it was embarrassing.

Hold on a minute – some of us loved Wrathchild…

Joe: Yeah, I'm sure you did – and that's why I'm using them as an example.

Nikki: That's your guilty pleasure. Everybody has one. And that's OK.

Speaking of guilty pleasures, you both have songs that are strippers' anthems – Leppard's *Pour Some Sugar On Me* and Mötley's *Girls, Girls, Girls*.

Nikki: Well, let's face it, strippers are people too.

Joe: They certainly are.

Did you write those songs with strippers in mind?

Joe: When we were putting …*Sugar* together, we said: 'This needs to be a sexy pace that girls can dance to.' I don't know whether the world 'pole' was ever used in that conversation, and I wouldn't say we strictly wrote it for strippers. But we were extremely happy when they adopted it.

And if guys saw chicks stripping to your song, you knew damn well that the next day they'd go out and buy it for their girlfriend. The strip bar was Tower Records, but sexier. That's the way I looked at it.

Nikki: For me as a lyricist, if you break down any Mötley record it's just a narrative of what was happening at the time. And at the time of *Girls, Girls Girls*, we were really just hanging out in strip clubs. So we said: 'Oh, we should do the video in those clubs.' It wasn't like a marketing campaign. We were just drinking a lot of whiskey and riding Harleys and fucking strippers.

Joe: The best stories are always accidents, Nikki.

And really, what's wrong with being sexy?

Joe: You're taking the piss, but it's true. Growing up with songs like *Get It On*, they just oozed sex. And when you saw Marc Bolan on *Top Of The Pops*, he wasn't surrounded by a bunch of guys who'd just come up from the pit – he was surrounded by blonde-haired girls in mini-skirts. And when you're watching that on TV in Sheffield, you're going: 'Yep, I'll take a little bit of that, thank you very much!'

Nikki: This is what I'm happy about. And I speak for Joe too here. Both of us are very happy that we can drive down the street and our neighbour – the MILF, the cougar with the nice new tit job – she wants to blow Joe or me just as bad as her 18 year-old daughter wants to. And that's because of the songs. I'm proud of that. And you know, it's not a lot to be proud of, but it is pretty fuckin' cool.

GETTY X2; THIS PAGE: KEVIN ESTRADA

> “BOTH BANDS DID A BIT OF THIS AND A BIT OF THAT. BUT WE WERE THE ONES WHO SUFFERED A DEATH THROUGH IT.”
>
> JOE ELLIOTT

“Hey Joe – you want to see some pictures of my second wife? *Special* pictures...”

TOP: KEVIN ESTRADA; BOTTOM: GETTY x2

Joe: Ha ha ha, that’s great. It may not have the substance that you’d get out of a Roger Waters quote, but fuck me, I’ll take it any day, man.

What did the 90s mean for Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe?

Joe: Our first 90s album was *Adrenalize*, which spent five or six weeks at number one in America, and was running parallel to Nirvana and Pearl Jam at the time. We didn’t release another album, *Slang*, until ’96, and then we struggled. But as much as the 90s were deemed tough on our behalf by the media, internally we were fine. And just so you know, Nikki, I thought the album you made in the 90s with John Corabi was fucking fantastic.

That album with Corabi alienated many Crüe fans with its grunge-influenced sound. Was that your biggest mistake?

Nikki: The only mistake was that we didn’t make that music under a different band name. But because Mötley has a deal where you’re getting $4m a record, you just keep the band name and the money. When the album came out I remember *Rolling Stone* saying, ‘This should be the album of the year – unfortunately it’s by Mötley Crüe.’ That was our experience of the 90s. There was some good music in the 90s, but I didn’t think the bands were very sexy. Soundgarden had some really cool riffs, and obviously Nirvana had a really iconic figurehead with Kurt Cobain. But nothing had that: ‘let’s go in the bathroom and have a quickie’ feel to it. And that’s what we had with Leppard and Mötley.

Joe: I couldn’t agree more.

Nikki: That was the 80s. It was before HIV, man. It was OK to get a hummer [blowjob] in the back of a limo and not even know the girl’s name. And I think we should both be really grateful – not only for all the hummers, but the fact that we’re embedded in that lifestyle forever. Any kid that’s gonna go to a strip club is eventually gonna hear a Def Leppard and a Mötley Crüe song. He’s probably not gonna get the hummer, though.

Joe: No, not in the North.

So what kind of debauchery will you be getting up to when you’re on tour together?

Joe: I imagine it’s going to be a much more tea and biscuits than Jack Daniel’s and heroin.

Nikki: I’m afraid so. We’ll probably be playing bingo. Joe has to play with me. And we have to find an old woman somewhere to call out the numbers. ❶

Def Leppard’s reissue of Hysteria is out now.

ARENA ROCK DEATH MATCH! Def Leppard vs Mötley Crüe: who’s most rock’n’roll?

	FORMED	TOTAL WORLDWIDE ALBUM SALES	SERIOUS CAR CRASHES	BLACK BELT KICK-BOXERS IN THE BAND	MEMBERS WHO HAVE DONE ‘BIRD’	TOURS CANCELLED DUE TO ‘SNOW ON THE ROOF’
DEF LEPPARD	1978, Sheffield, England	65m	1 (involving Vince Neil)	1 (Phil Collen)	0	0
MÖTLEY CRÜE	1981, Hollywood, Los Angeles	80m	1 (involving Rick Allen)	0	2 (Vince Neil and Tommy Lee)	1 (in 1987)

WINNERS

MÖTLEY CRÜE

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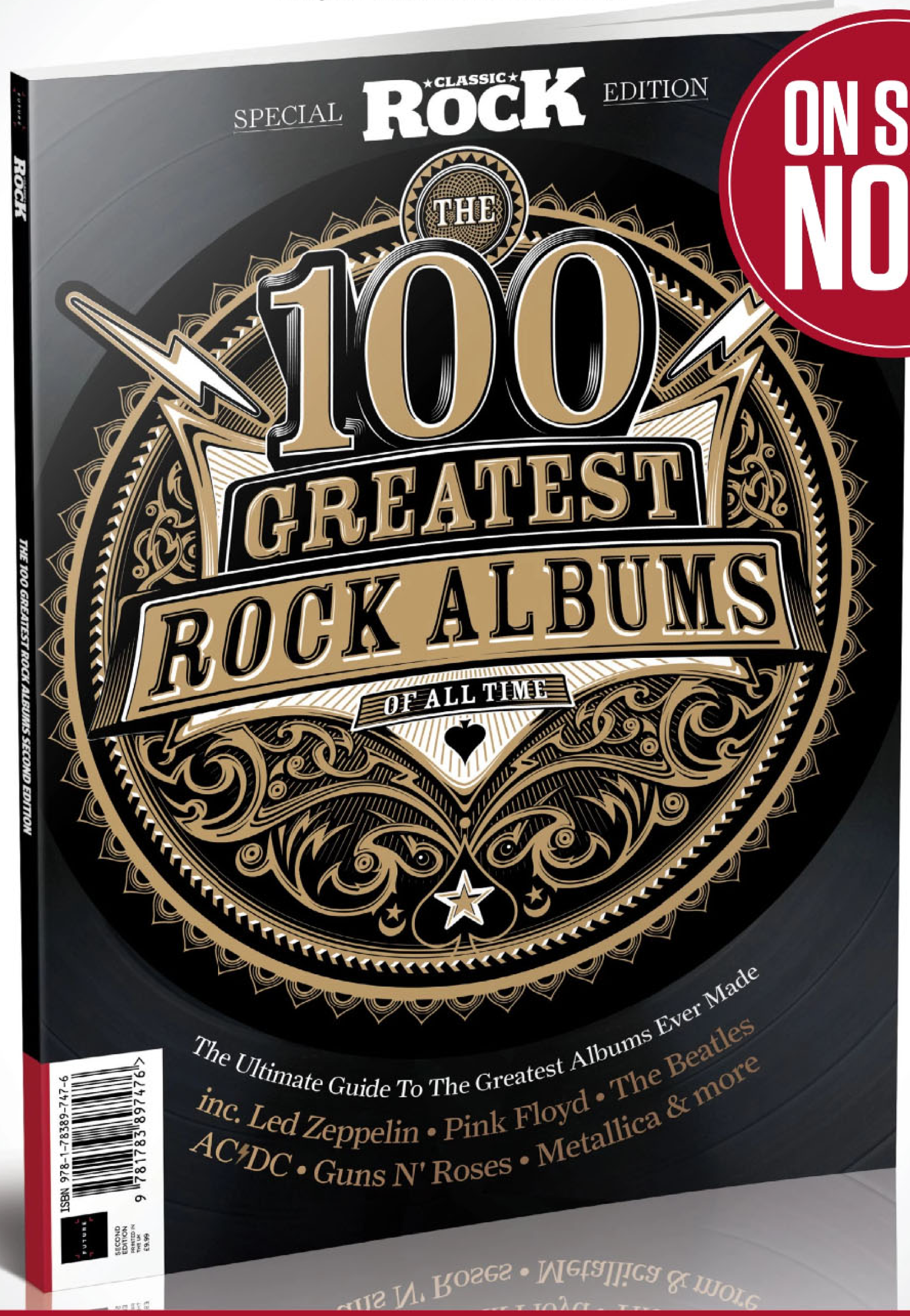
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REELIN' IN THE

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Here's lookin' at you, kid: *Permanent Vacation*-era Aerosmith, 1988. (*l-r*) Brad Whitford, Tom Hamilton, Steven Tyler, Joey Kramer, Joe Perry.

YEARS

As the 80s began, Aerosmith were in the grip of debilitating substance issues, estranged from their genius guitarist, and at their lowest ebb. Only a fool would've bet on them to return, bigger than ever. But that's what happened...

Words: **Neil Jeffries**

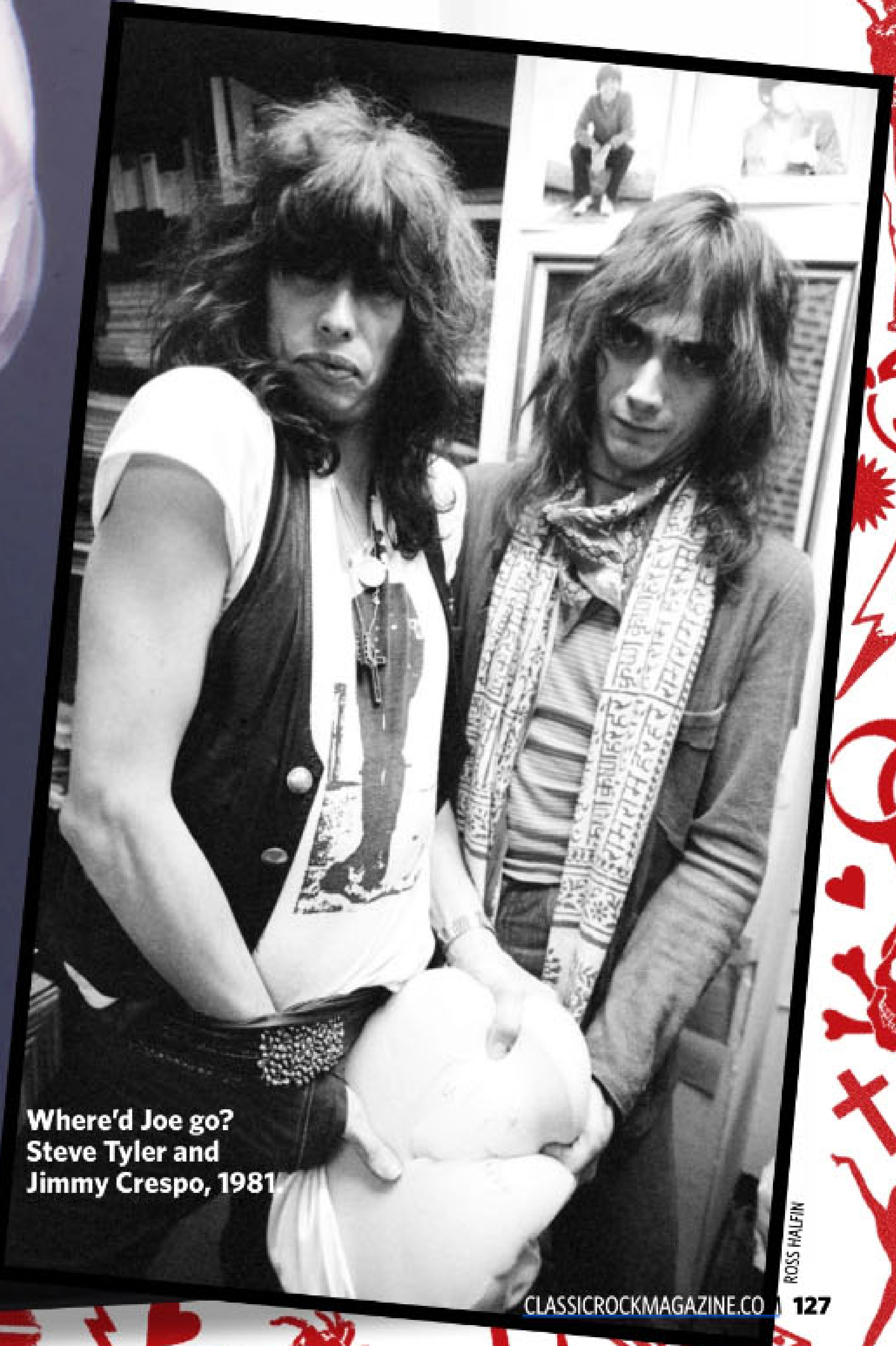
It's January 1980 and Aerosmith are playing *Reefer Head Woman* from their new *Night In The Ruts* album at the Civic Centre in Maine. It's a sold-out show, but singer Steven Tyler doesn't care.

Frustrated at having no cocaine to counteract the intoxicating effects of all the booze he's swallowed since waking – rounded off by two double martinis gulped minutes before taking the stage – he gives up and pretends to pass out. Throwing himself to the stage he fakes a seizure, twitching his leg to make it look authentic.

Such is his level of chemical dependency and alcoholic intoxication, this is the best idea he can come up with to avoid the indignity of playing a gig just plain old-fashioned drunk.

To this point in the tour Aerosmith have just about been getting away with it. Though with guitarist Joe Perry no longer in the band – replaced by JP-lookalike Jimmy Crespo – they are a shadow of their former selves. They've played shows where the singer has frequently forgotten his lines, and, when not at the mic has just sat on the drum riser, too unsteady to stand, much less move about.

»

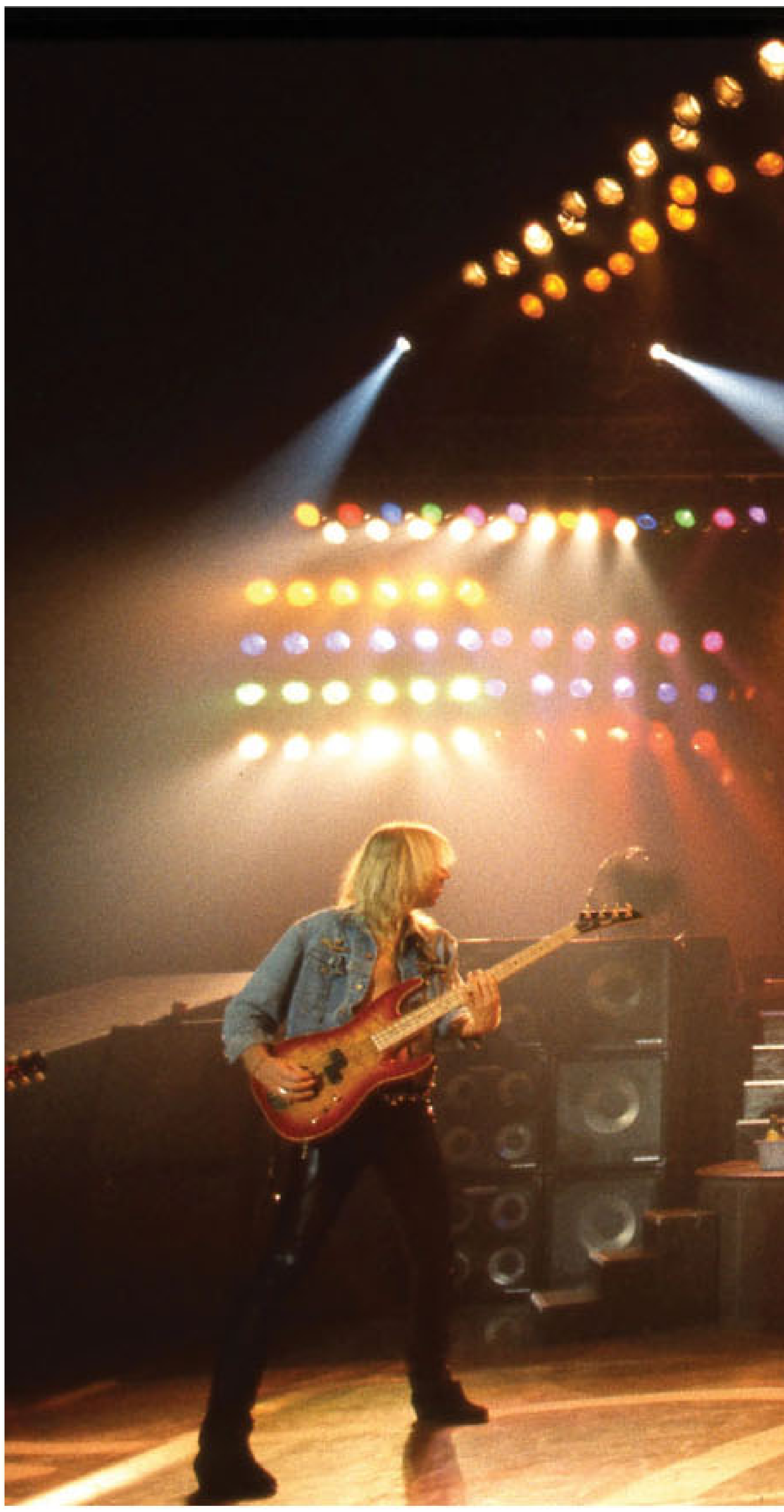


Where'd Joe go? Steve Tyler and Jimmy Crespo, 1981

ROSS HALFIN

Hey Mr Bassman: Tom Hamilton enjoys a rare bright moment during the *Rock In A Hard Place* tour.

MARK WEISS



Tonight it's worse. The band stop playing, and Tyler is carried from the stage, a faker and a fuck-up.

Elsewhere in early 1980, Perry is touring with his original Joe Perry Project. He feels liberated from the "dysfunctional depression" that was crippling Aerosmith and had forced him out of his own band – but now his new outfit faces ruin because singer Ralph Morman has turned into an out-of-control drunk.

"One night he showed up in a wild state of inebriation," Perry recalls in his newly published biography *Rocks*. "I hauled off and decked him."

These days Perry acknowledges the irony. As the book candidly admits, he was not in good shape himself: a barely functioning drunk addicted to snorting heroin. Career-wise, The Joe Perry Project's *Let The Music Do The Talking* album had been well reviewed, but was poorly promoted by Columbia and wasn't troubling the charts. The gigs, though good, were small-scale. This was a problem – because Aerosmith's co-manager David Krebs had not long since told Joe he personally owed $180,000 in room service charges and helpfully suggested that a solo album might be a good way to pay the bill.

For Aerosmith and for Joe Perry, however, things are going to get worse before they get any better.

* * *

The 1980s began less than four years after Aerosmith's fourth album *Rocks* had shipped platinum upon release, rising to No.3 on the Billboard Hot 100. Hindsight suggests that *Rocks*, the multi-platinum follow-up to the multi-platinum *Toys In The Attic*, was where the 'first career' of Aerosmith peaked. Afterwards, their decline and fall would be as marked and meteoric as their rise had been.

After Tyler's fake seizure, Aerosmith cancelled a week's worth of dates – thereby falling a little further – then resumed and limped on to the end of the tour, and more drink- and drug-induced lethargy. When they reconvened, work on a proposed next album was painfully slow. Then that faltering progress all but ground to a halt after Tyler badly injured himself in a motorcycle crash. Silently but inevitably, poverty crept up and was soon crippling them all.

Bassist Tom Hamilton: "For two years, the album we were working on – *Rock In A Hard Pace* – was always two months away. It was hard times, we [Tom and his wife Terri] sold our house and moved into a condo…"

Drummer Joey Kramer: "It was rough. There was no money. I was on the balls of my ass. I spent everything I had… until, finally, *nothing*."

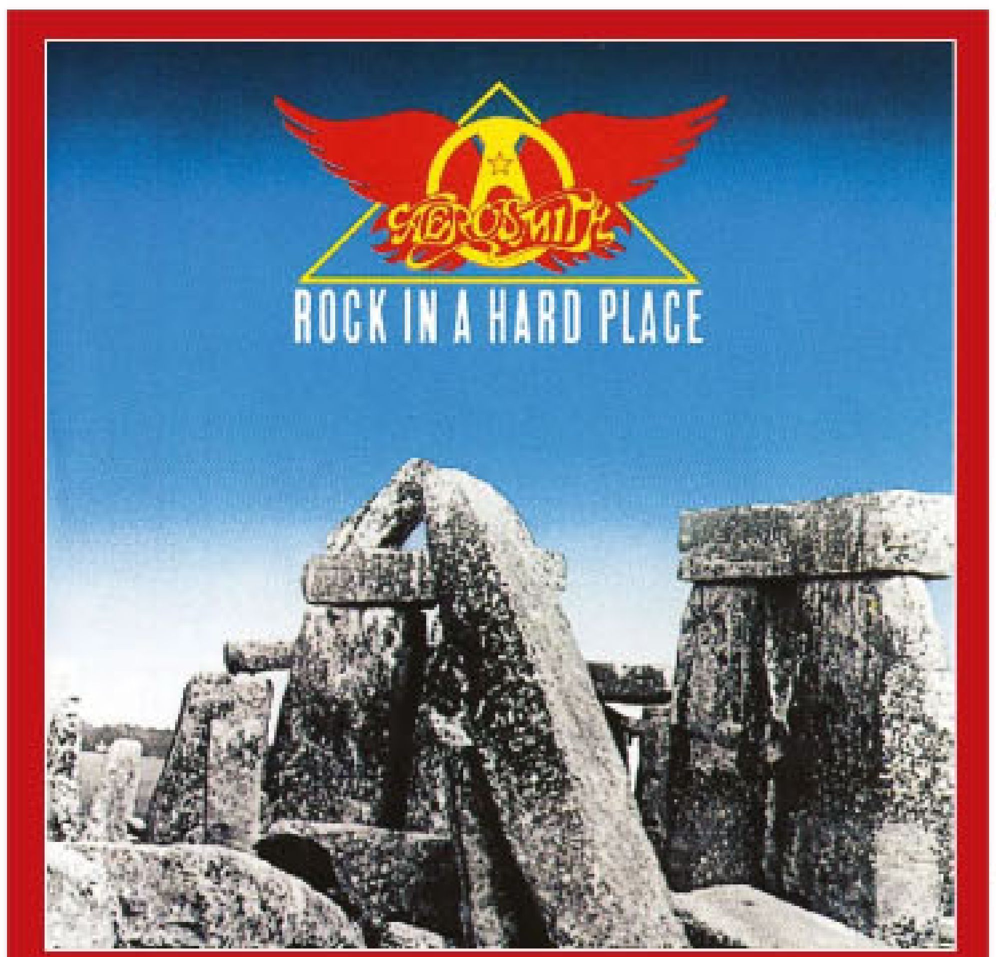
Guitarist Brad Whitford: "No money, no income, all my savings going to alimony and mortgages. Sold my guitars… sold my house…"

Eventually Whitford could stand it no more, and quit. Aerosmith were down to just three original members, Tyler plus the rhythm section of Hamilton and Kramer.

As Perry's marriage to fellow drug addict Elyssa continued to falter and debts mounted, he released

Having shaken the monkey of drug addiction off their backs, a rejuvenated Aerosmith shone on the *Pump* tour of 1989-90 – their first sortie since the 70s to visit Europe.

ROSS HALFIN



ROCK IN A HARD PLACE

Columbia, 1982

An album often derided, because Joe Perry and Brad Whitford had gone. So, how can it be regarded as a true Aerosmith record?

But the reality is that their replacements, Rick Dufay and Jimmy Crespo, did a fine job as guitarists, and *Rock In A Hard Place* is clearly superior to is predecessor, 1979's *Night In The Ruts*.

This was an album created in something of a turmoil, following a two-year hiatus. The band began recording with Whitford still in the line-up, but he soon departed; however, he can be heard playing the rhythm parts on *Lightning Strikes*, which is unquestionably the stand-out track here – so good, in fact, that Perry even admitted when he rejoined Aerosmith in 1984 that he loved playing this live, and wished he'd been on the studio version.

But this is far from being the only strong song on *Rock In A Hard Place*. *Jailbait* is a firm opener, while *Bitch's Brew* is one of those in-your-face moments that brought to mind the way things had been in the *Rocks* era. And the version of the torch song *Cry Me A River* is only a small step apart from the famed Julie London original.

It was the first studio album from Aerosmith that didn't sell a million copies in America. But with Jack Douglas producing, there was a definite sonic continuity to what had gone before. The band were certainly making no attempt to ingratiate themselves with the sounds of the new decade, and that suited them and the material. **MD**

Top track: *Lightning Strikes*. It's got everything: epic build-up, raucous hook, some devastating guitar work and a chorus that gets you hooked and reels you in.

"IT WAS ROUGH. THERE WAS NO MONEY. I WAS ON THE BALLS OF MY ASS. I SPENT EVERYTHING I HAD... UNTIL, FINALLY, NOTHING." **JOEY KRAMER**

the second Project album, *I've Got The Rock'N'Rolls Again* (featuring new vocalist Charlie Farren) in 1981. Whitford, meanwhile, hooked up with Ted Nugent's singer Derek St Holmes to release the eponymous *Whitford-St Holmes* the same year. They toured briefly, but their record didn't sell well.

On the recommendation of producer Jack Douglas, Aerosmith recruited Rick Dufay to play on Whitford's side of the stage. It seemed like a good idea at the time, even though Dufay boasted to the singer that he had escaped from a "loony bin" having jumped out of a window and broken his legs…

The older, wiser and sober Tyler now reckons Dufay was "out of his mind". Back then, though, the singer barely cared.

When the tour ended he "got deeper and deeper into drugs", hanging out with and scoring heroin off his friend Richie Supa (with whom he'd co-written a live favourite called *Chip Away The Stone*). Somehow, stoned and hallucinating, he eventually managed to write enough lyrics to finish *Rock In A Hard Place* in time for release in August 1982. Good in parts, but a long way from former glories, it wasn't a record that suggested the epic amount of time spent on it had been a wise investment. A Gold sales award – ending a string of Platinum hits for Aerosmith – and a Billboard chart peak of No.32 confirmed this.

Eventually, Tyler admitted to himself he needed help. He first tried detoxing at the Good Samaritan Hospital in New York in 1983 but, as he admitted in his 2011 biography *Does The Noise In My Head Bother You?*: "One of the reasons I wanted to go to Good Samaritan was that I heard they did tests on heroin… I thought: 'Can I be one of the guinea pigs?'"

By then, Aerosmith's Krebs was hiring psychiatrists to meet Tyler and report back with their thoughts. Domestically, Tyler's fights with his wife of 12 years, Cyrinda, had turned physical and violent. Once, as she prepared to drive off, he jumped on her car and smashed the windscreen.

Tyler: "Cocaine insanity! She got out of the car and a violent, uncontrollable fight erupted. We were punching and scratching, and we fell over and rolled on the ground…"

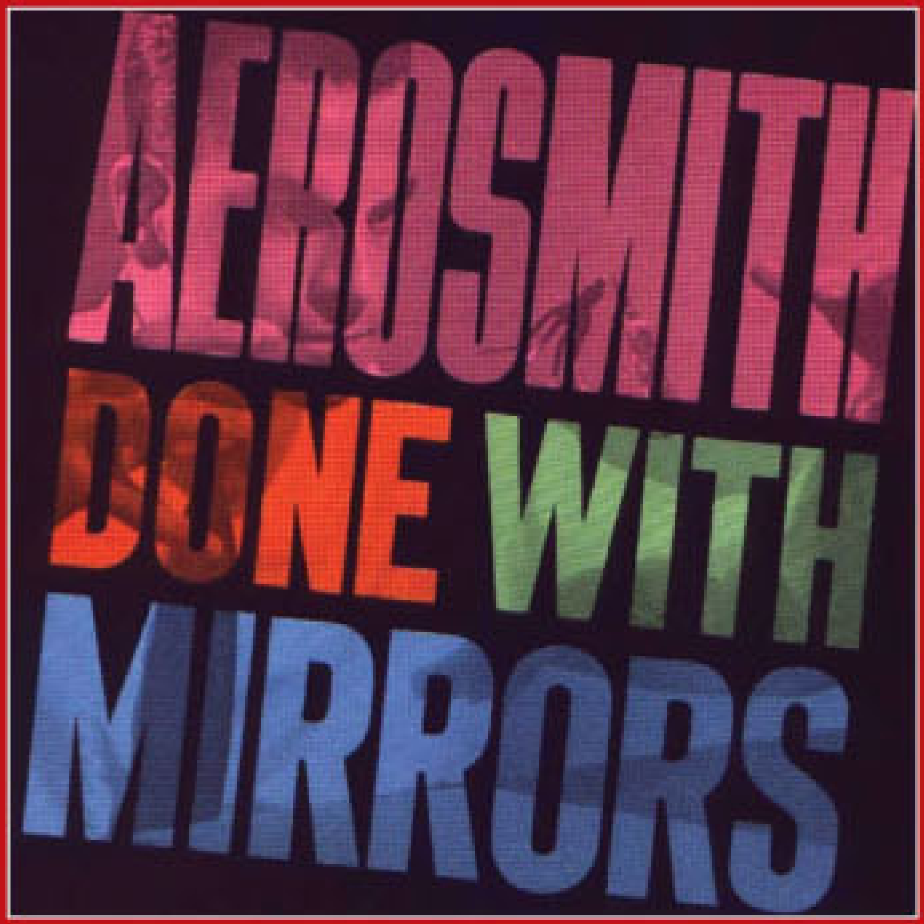
For Perry, domestic life was no sweeter. Elyssa continued to spend money extravagantly, as if he were still a member of the 70s Aerosmith.

He recalled: "I was on the verge of losing my house. I was fucked up from drinking. I thought I was at the bottom, but every day that bottom kept getting deeper and darker."

Scream for me: Aerosmith let it all hang out on the *Permanent Vacation tour*.

GETTY

CUT OUT: ROSS HALFIN



DONE WITH MIRRORS

Geffen, 1985

1985 was all change for Aerosmith: new label, new logo, new producer. But, to use a David Lee Roth quote, they had the same old funky attitude. With the fab five reunited, thanks to the return of Perry and Whitford, there was genuine hope that Aerosmith could get back to the pre-eminence they enjoyed in the previous decade.

But by the time *Done With Mirrors* came out, the rock landscape had drastically altered. The success of Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe, and the arrival of MTV, had ushered in a fresh approach. Aerosmith were guided by Geffen to take note of this by working with producer Ted Templeman, and while he didn't smooth out their edges, nonetheless he did give them a more focused vigour.

In truth, it worked well. Songs like *My Fist Your Face*, *Shela* and *She's On Fire* were good enough to have graced any of the band's most acclaimed albums. And they even cut a tremendous version of the Joe Perry Project classic *Let The Music Do The Talking*, proving that the original had really been no more than a glorified demo for the real deal.

But the album only got to No.36 in the US charts, and failed to signal a return to the glory days. Much of the blame for its comparative failure lay in the decision to abandon the iconic Aerosmith logo, and also to play on the album title in the sleeve design. A misguided marketing approach. Musically, though, it was impressive. **MD**

Top track: *My Fist Your Face*. This is Aerosmith delivering a killer punch or several on a song that drips old style sleaze, yet cranked out in the manner of band with a fresh desire.

Sometimes, though, as the unexpectedly sage-like JK Rowling has observed, rock bottom can become a solid foundation on which to build a new life.

* * *

That new life – or "second career" as the five original, once-again-Platinum-selling members of Aerosmith are wont to describe it – was still a way up the road.

Perry was taking any gigs he could to earn cash – sometimes supporting the likes of Heart and the J Geils Band, always travelling in a van and staying in cheap hotels to keep costs low. Back home, he took the life-changing decision to walk out on Elyssa, after six-and-a-half years together – but paid a heavy price in the battle for access to their infant son Adrian.

He was happy to play with the Project, but the debts he faced weren't going away. One good thing was happening in the guitarist's life, though. He had hooked up with a new manager, Tim Collins, who became "the only steady force in my life". The deal was sealed after Perry tested Collins' commitment by emptying a drawer in which he kept his unopened mail: mostly bills, IRS claims and foreclosure notices threatening repossession of his home, but also some unsigned death threats (presumably from drug dealers he owed money) and royalty cheques worth thousands of dollars. Collins took them away in a grocery bag and came back a week later offering to pay off "a big portion" of the guitarist's debts, no strings attached.

Asked why, Collins simply reasoned: "I figure I need to do this to win your trust. I believe in your talent. I believe your best years are ahead of you. I want to manage you."

One of his first moves was to negotiate Perry out of his deal with Columbia and get him a new one with MCA. Perry disbanded the old Project and hired a new one (fronted by singer Cowboy Mach Bell) on smaller salaries to record their third album, *Once A Rocker, Always A Rocker*, in 1983. It wasn't as good as the first two, but the band got to open for ZZ Top on some of their US *Eliminator* tour. The headline gigs they were playing, though, Perry says, "were getting smaller and smaller".

He did persuade Whitford to join the line-up, however, and the rhythm guitarist stayed for a month. Kramer later played drums at a few dates, too. Much more significantly, though, Perry was about to meet his soulmate, who was discovered when the Project were about to make a video for their last chance at a hit, a song called *Black Velvet Pants*.

Perry: "Tim Collins had a bunch of books sent over by talent agencies, I thumbed through half-heartedly until I came to a picture that stopped me in my tracks – a headshot of a beautiful blonde called Billie Montgomery. There was a look in her eyes that got to me, heart and soul. I had to meet her."

When he did meet her, it was love at first sight. And their relationship would endure long after the video shoot had wrapped, to this day.

Aerosmith, meanwhile, were in trouble. They were playing bigger venues than the Project but, as Tyler has admitted, the tour for *Rock In A Hard Place* was "a disaster".

Tyler: "By 1983 I had no money and no future except getting further into the pit. Back in 1976, when I read stories about guys who lost everything and blew a million bucks snorting all they had, I used to say: 'That'll *never* happen to me.' But in the end, I blew $20 million."

In addition, he came to admit that he was missing his buddy: "During the years that Joe and I were broken up I realised I wasn't half the musician I thought I was without him."

The two had kept in touch, though.

Perry: "I'd occasionally call Steven, or he'd call me… 'How're things going?' Great, I'd lie. How about you? 'Great!' he'd lie… The bullshit flew thick and fast."

Tyler: "I went to see the Joe Perry Project perform at the Bottom Line, then Joe came to the Worcester Centrum in the spring of 1983 to see an Aerosmith concert. We did a few lines of heroin in the dressing room – just for old times' sake…"

The heroin took its toll on Tyler, who collapsed on stage in front of 14,000 people… and although it had been Tyler's wife Cyrinda who supplied the drug, Perry took the blame, with Tom Hamilton lambasting him: "It's just like the old days, Joe. You're no good for this band. Look what you did! Why don't you just stay the fuck away from us?"

Yet the idea of a reunion persisted.

* * *

In early 1984, Tyler and Perry met with Tim Collins and, despite some initial friction, Tyler – by then living in a hotel on $20 a day – agreed the original line-up should get together for a meeting at the only place available: Tom Hamilton's house.

Perry: "If you want to put it on the IQ meter, Tom is a really smart guy, but I think he had just been more conservative with his money and watched what was going on. Also, he didn't have to go through a divorce. He's the one who's been married the longest among us.

"Any professional who has to go through a divorce, the finances are going to take a real hit. It's one of those things in life, it isn't peculiar to rock'n'roll. If you're making a lot of money, they take a lot of money."

Once it became apparent that Joe would only rejoin the band on the condition it cut all ties with Leber-Krebs Management and joined him with Tim Collins, they set about discussing a way forward and naming a scapegoat for all their problems. They settled on David Krebs.

Perry: "The main influence that the drugs will have had was that we were partying too much and didn't notice the kind of money we were spending or take care of the decisions we were making – I don't think we could have spent *that* much on drugs! And it's not like we all had three houses and 16 Maseratis. We all had one house and a couple of nice cars, and that was it.

"I look back and just think we were taken advantage of, maybe in some quasi-illegal ways. You just have to do the numbers in your head: all those years we were selling out so many arenas, so many times. So to sit there and be told that the band's kitty was empty, I mean – did they do something illegal? I don't think so. We couldn't prove anything. Was it immoral? Yeah!

"They weren't taking care of us in terms of taxes and things like that. I should have been more on top of it but that was my own naïveté. There was

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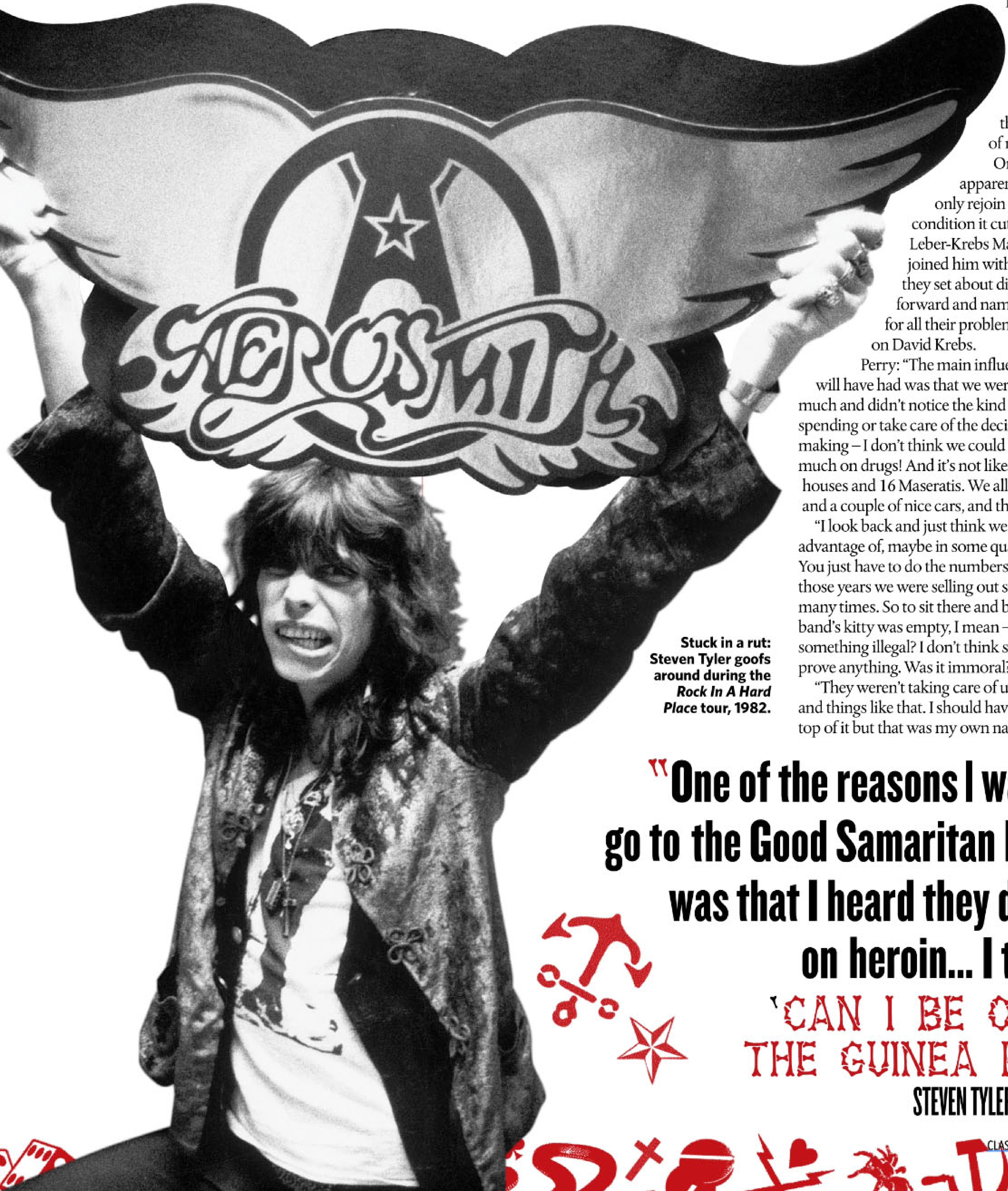
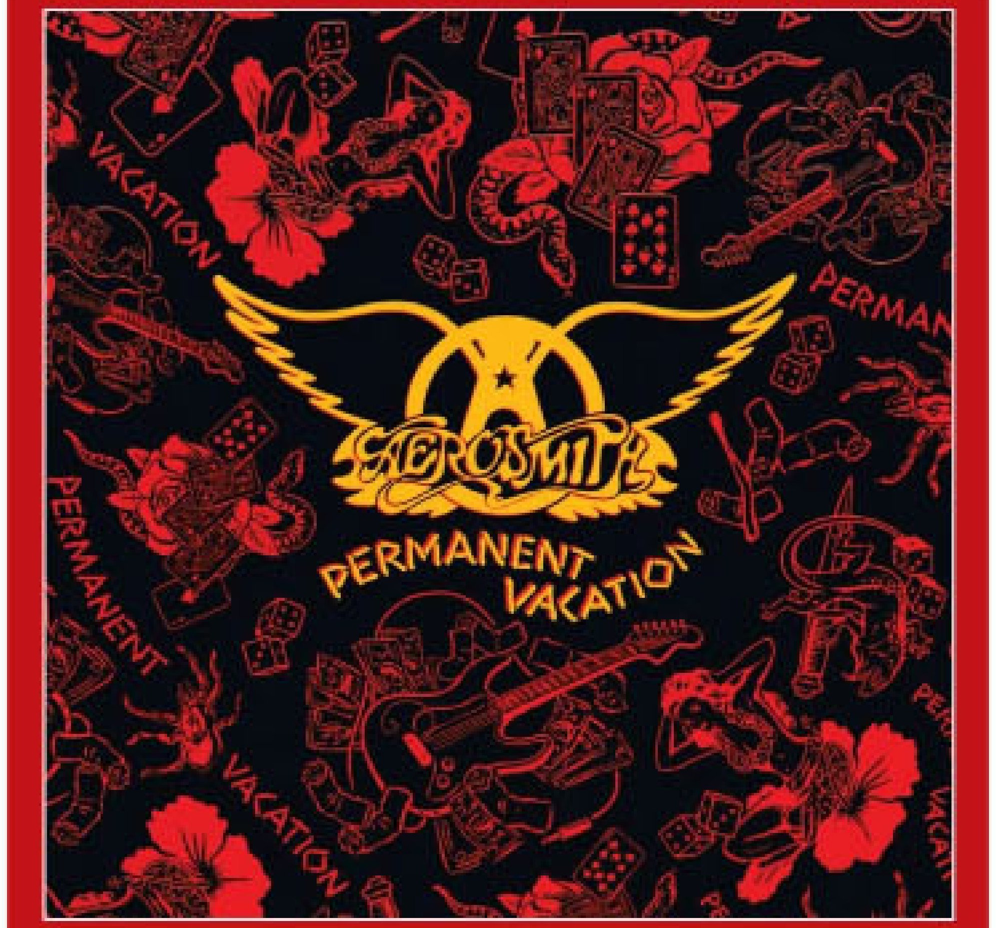


Stuck in a rut: Steven Tyler goofs around during the *Rock In A Hard Place* tour, 1982.

> **"One of the reasons I wanted to go to the Good Samaritan Hospital was that I heard they did tests on heroin… I thought: 'CAN I BE ONE OF THE GUINEA PIGS?'"**
> **STEVEN TYLER**



PERMANENT VACATION

Geffen, 1987

Aerosmith learned from the comparative commercial failure of *Done With Mirrors*. Back came the winged logo. And in came outside writers for the first time in the band's career. There was just one Tyler/Perry song here, namely *Girl Keeps Coming Apart*. Desmond Child, Jim Vallance and Holly Knight were all involved on the album's biggest successes, while producer Bruce Fairbairn gave the whole sound a contemporary sheen.

Aerosmith now had to compete with Bon Jovi and Whitesnake. And *Permanent Vacation* did exactly that. Tracks like *Dude (Looks Like A Lady)*, *Angel* and *Rag Doll* were major implants on the singles chart in the States, with interest in the band fuelled by the success the previous year of Tyler and Perry's collaboration with Run-DMC on the latter's version of *Walk This Way*.

It also helped this was the first time the band had recorded sober. However, this was perhaps also the reason why the album came across as a little too sophisticated in tone for what was expected from the band. You had the feeling that something like the ultra bluesy *Hangman Jury* would have been better recorded in the days of *Rocks* or *Toys In The Attic*, while the cover of The Beatles' *I'm Down* is no more than a competent filler.

But the album struck the right chord for a new generation who swiftly took Aerosmith to their bosom, propelling the album to No.11 in the States, and also gave them their first Top 40 triumph in the UK. **MD**

Top track: *Magic Touch*. The most obviously AOR song here. The start is laced with melodic temptation, and it doesn't disappoint. A real anthem for the mid-80s.

"DURING THE YEARS THAT JOE AND I WERE BROKEN UP I REALISED I WASN'T HALF THE MUSICIAN I THOUGHT I WAS WITHOUT HIM."

STEVEN TYLER

a lot of money there, just lying on the table, and people took it because they could. That is the story. I can't prove anything – but I was constantly asking for accountings and things like that, but it was kinda tough to get the rest of the band to lock up."

While the reunion idea was left hanging, a third party was about to plant a crucial seed. Alice Cooper was looking for a new guitarist, and his manager Shep Gordon called Collins to sound out JP. Seeing no long-term future for the Project, Perry jumped at the chance and went to Gordon's county pile to meet and jam with Alice. The next day, while Alice played golf, Perry called Tyler to gloat. At the time Tyler pretended not to care but deep down he was incensed. His book suggests he remembers the incident differently to Perry, but says that he later called him back:

"Are you seriously going to be his guitar player? What the fuck? That's the dumbest thing I ever heard! Just stop. The shit's over. Why don't you just come back with Aerosmith?"

Well, since Tyler had asked so nicely, how could Joe refuse?

* * *

Initial rehearsals were fraught with tension, but gradually the band found something like their old groove, reworking old songs they remembered and discovering others they'd forgotten. Collins built a support network, hired a crew and so the band – crucially, still drug-dependent at this point – went out on what was dubbed the *Back In The Saddle* Tour. Some shows were good, some were horrible, but fans were stoked and tickets sold. The tour ran from late June to end of August then, after a break, from December into January 1985.

Meanwhile, Tim Collins set about courting record labels. One of the keenest was Geffen, as represented by weirdy-beardy teetotal A&R man John Kalodner.

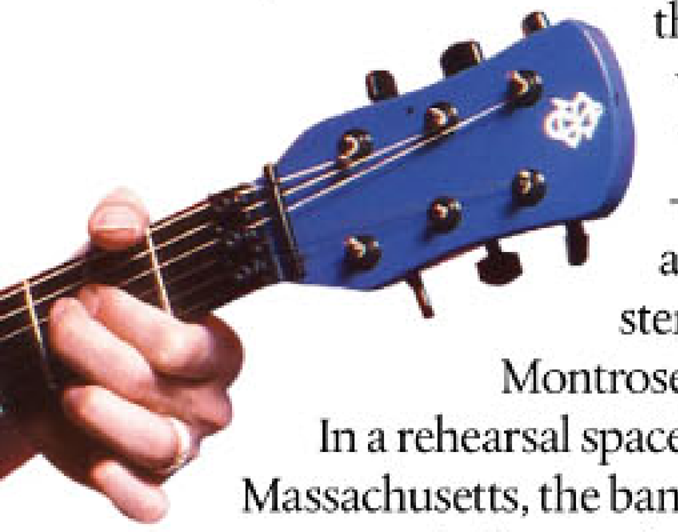
At first the band were sceptical, viewing him as just another record company guy – albeit looking like a guru in his white suit and long hair. Financially burned and emotionally fragile, they didn't trust outsiders. But Kalodner kept showing up, to see if these 70s legends might still be worth a deal in the 80s. In the end, at a show at LA's Greek Theatre, a link was forged while Kalodner was talking with Brad's wife, Karen. She showed him the gun she always carried and, in *Crocodile Dundee* style, he showed her his.

Kalodner recalled: "I pulled up the trouser leg of my white suit and showed her the .357 Magnum I was wearing in an ankle holster. 'This is how I get around LA,' I told her. I was showing off, but it worked. As soon as the band found out I was

CUT OUT: NEIL ZLOZOWER/ATLASICONS.COM MAIN: ROSS HALFIN

Aerosmith triumph at Texxas Jam, at the Dallas Cotton Bowl, June 20, 1987.

packing dynamite, they thought I was totally cool. It broke the ice with them because they loved guns."



A deal with Geffen followed. Next they needed a producer. Tim Collins instructed Kalodner to get them Ted Templeman, who'd just hit platinum with Van Halen's *1984* – though the band's admiration for Templeman stemmed from his work on Montrose's debut.

In a rehearsal space in Somerville, Massachusetts, the band knocked together "17 new songs in four weeks". Judging by the eight that made what became the band's eighth studio album *Done With Mirrors* (its title a reference both to magic and a cocaine user's preference for snorting the drug from reflective surfaces), few were up to scratch. On day one, they ran through most of them and Tom Hamilton insists: "I think we wound up using most of the takes from that first day of just slapping them down on tape."

Two weeks before the record was due to be mastered, Tyler was in his hotel room trying to write lyrics. It didn't bode well.

Perry: "We were still doing everything like we had before. Everybody was still… dabbling. We thought we could continue the same way."

Kramer: "*Done With Mirrors* sounds to me like an incomplete record, without the finishing touches, the nuances, the personalities."

Kalodner was even more disappointed: "When I realised the only good song was *Let The Music Do The Talking* – an old Joe Perry song – I knew we were in trouble."

He was right. Hardcore fans liked it but, outside the rock charts, there were no hits from *Done With Mirrors*. To get back in the charts, the band were offered a most unlikely route. A call to Collins from Rick Rubin of hip hop label Def Jam Recordings saw Perry recording guitar tracks and Tyler adding vocals to a new version of their 1975 hit *Walk This Way*, by New York rappers Run-DMC. The track was done in a day on March 9, 1986, and the famous "breaking down the walls" cross-culture/anti-racism video shot two weeks later.

Although plans to work further with Rubin faltered (yielding only their cover of *Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu* on the *Less Than Zero* soundtrack) the single became a crossover hit. It reached No.8 in the R&B/Hip-Hop singles chart and No.4 in Billboard's Hot 100 after the video proved a huge hit on MTV. Although only two of the members had been involved, Aerosmith's profile grew and the name reached a whole new generation, in the US and in Europe.

While their old management tried to sue the band, and their former label muddied the waters by ⋙

Season of wither: Aerosmith field a 'B-team' for the *Rock In A Hard Place* tour, 1982. Jimmy Crespo, second from left; Rick Dufay, far right.

BOTH PICTURES: ROSS HALFIN

releasing compilation albums (including *Classics Live!*, featuring the Crespo/Dufay line-up), the *Done With Mirrors* tour ran out of steam, the album having sunk without trace.

Tyler had tried rehab on three further occasions – encouraged by his band-mates who reasoned that as long as the singer was sober, they could continue getting high and function behind him. Predictably, Tyler didn't agree and simply rebelled and lapsed.

The band and Collins persisted. Tyler and his new wife-to-be Teresa checked themselves into a methadone clinic and made progress. But this was not enough to satisfy everyone, and so in the autumn of 1986 Tim Collins hired a therapist to call an intervention on the singer. Once again, objecting to being singled out as what he called the "designated patient" while knowing full well that the band (and Collins) were as guilty as he, the intervention felt like an assault to Tyler. But the power of his peer group proved irresistible. Tyler entered rehab once more, this time emerging fiercely determined to make his band-mates and new manager do the same. This time: success.

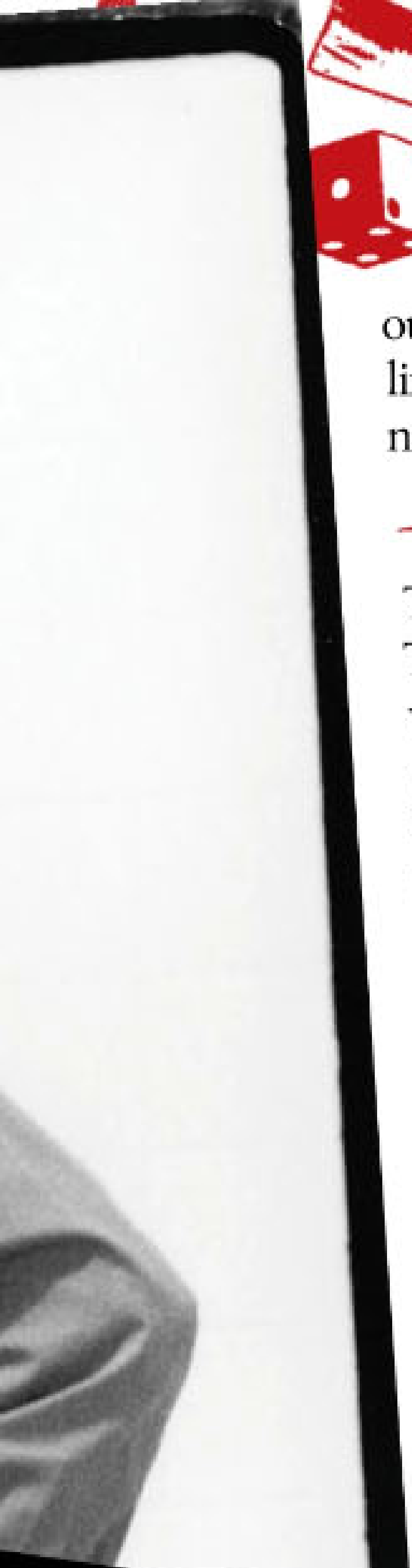
"When I read stories about guys who lost everything snorting all they had, I used to say: 'That'll never happen to me'. BUT IN THE END I BLEW **20** MILLION!"

STEVEN TYLER

One by one – starting with Joe Perry in October 1986, following the birth of his second son Anthony – the rest of Aerosmith went through rehab, too. For some, the respite lasted only two or three years – but they never fell so far from the wagon as they'd been before. For Tyler, it was good for 12 years – enough time to allow Aerosmith to soar to the end of the 1980s as successfully as they'd done in the previous decade. Except this time, they were healthy.

Perry: "We realised after *Done With Mirrors* that we had to be *done* with mirrors – we had to change the way we were doing things. One of those was getting fucked up and partying too much.

"So we cleaned up and finally that creativity could happen again. It was the final step. We proved we could sell tickets, going out without a record, touring just on the strength of



our name and to show that the original line-up was back together. But we just needed to make that one final step."

* * *

That step was 1987's *Permanent Vacation*. Tyler described it as "the best album we'd made in 10 years – and the first one we ever did sober". It was also, famously, the first album where they called on the services of writers from outside of the band.

That process was instigated by A&R man Kalodner, who insisted that, after the failure of *Done With Mirrors*, the band make their next record *his* way – by bringing in fresh blood to help them write. He persuaded Aerosmith they needed to score some hits, and that they could do so without selling out their hard-rocking roots. His first call had been to Jim Steinman but, because Steinman didn't want to work away from his house, he didn't get the gig. The plan to use Ted Templeman once again ended when the producer baulked at Kalodner's insistence that, unlike on *Done With Mirrors*, the band's A&R man be allowed in the studio to keep an eye on progress.

Kalodner's golden ticket solution was for Aerosmith to go to Little Mountain Sound studios in Vancouver to record with producer Bruce Fairbairn – the man at the helm for Bon Jovi's multi-platinum *Slippery When Wet*, recorded the year before. Fairbairn's team included Jim Vallance, who had co-written every song on Bryan Adams' 1983 album, *Reckless*.

Perry: "Bruce had a little clique of talented musicians, a real scene up there. Vancouver is a great place, I love that city, there's a lot of creativity there. Jim Vallance was the nicest guy you'd every want to meet and hang around with. It was really fun working with him.

"Keyboards and guitar were his two main instruments, but I'm sure he could play drums, too. Being a songwriter, I think he could play anything, to some degree. But he was also getting into that whole computer thing. Jim was one of the first guys to use computers to write programs for different drum patterns. That was really where he and I locked up.

"For me the biggest inspiration comes from the drums. When I first played with Steven he jammed on drums. I'd see him play in bands when he was a singing drummer, and when I put this band together, that was what I envisioned. His singing was top-notch but when he drums he's not just hitting them, he really thinks about the song. He has this way of turning the beat around and that's inspiring to me."

The Toxic Twins, reunited: Joe Perry and Steven Tyler, promoting *Pump*, 1989.

For Tyler, the most important part of Team Fairbairn was Desmond Child. Born in Cuba as John Charles Barrett, Child was 34, five years younger than Tyler when they met. Behind him was a short recording career alongside two girls in Desmond Child & Rouge, and a far more successful career writing songs for the likes of Kiss (including the disco hit *I Was Made For Lovin' You* and *Heaven's On Fire*), Cher, Bonnie Tyler and… Bon Jovi. He enjoyed a co-credit on *Livin' On A Prayer* and *You Give Love A Bad Name*, songs that had yielded the band No.1 and No.7 placings, respectively, on the Billboard chart, as well as two Top 20 hits in the UK.

Tyler: "I'd written with the band and I'd written with Richie Supa, but Richie and I were best friends. Desmond Child was another matter all together."

According to Tyler, Child walked in sporting a moustache and looking "dapper". They hit it off instantly, although not necessarily in a good way.

"I loved writing with Desmond because we always got into arguments," said the singer, without irony. "When Desmond started throwing things at me that I didn't know how to use I should've said: 'Nah! I can't sing that.' But it took me a couple of years before I could voice my objections that strongly."

One of the first songs that they worked together on was *Dude (Looks Like A Lady)*, which at that stage was a Tyler/Perry composition that the singer recalls had a largely finished lyric but, much to his frustration, lacked a first verse. Child gave it to him with the line *'Pull into a bar by the shore'*. Tyler loved it ❯❯❯

Aerosmith
PUMP

PUMP

Geffen, 1989

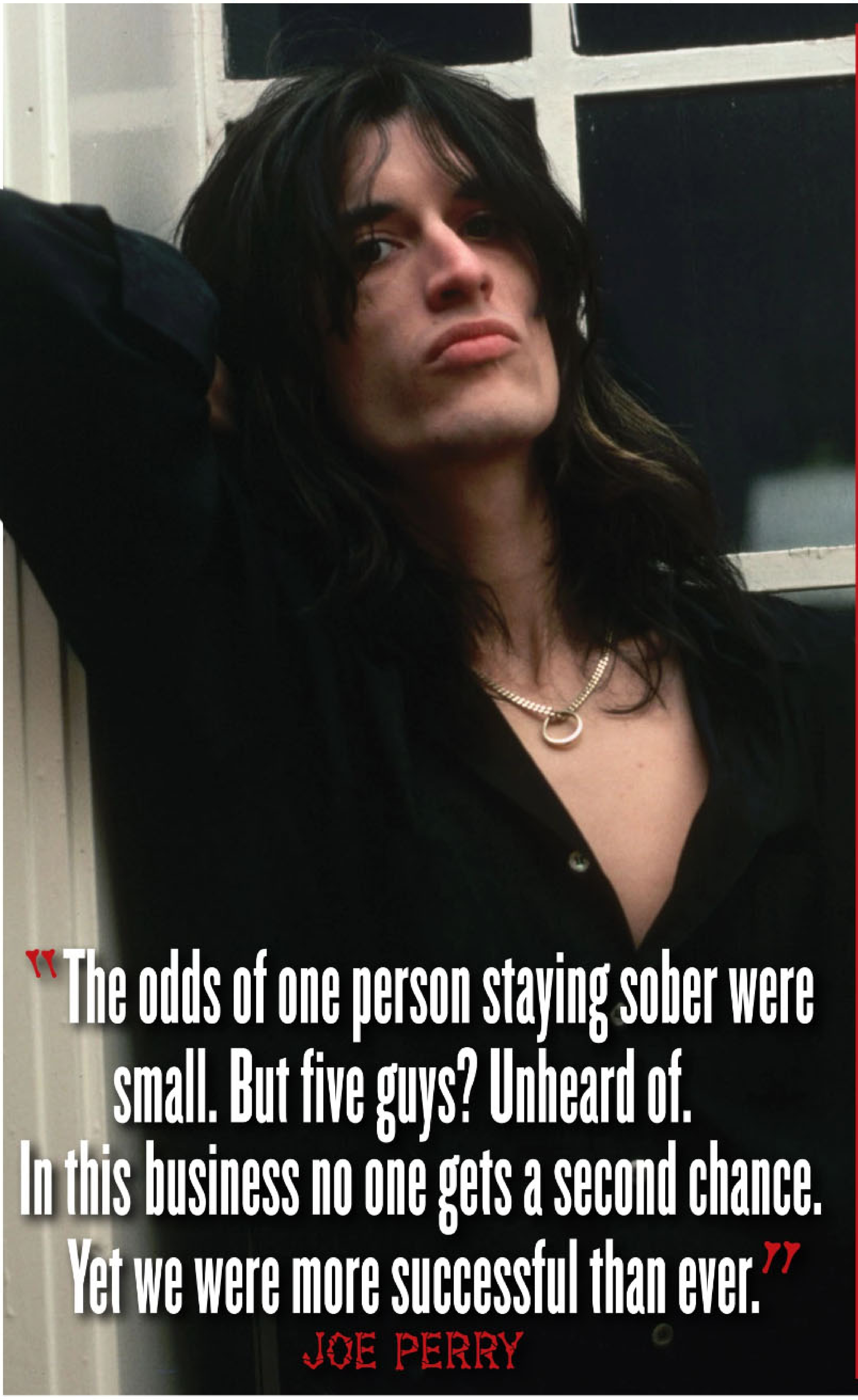
What Aerosmith gained through *Permanent Vacation*, they took to another level with *Pump*. Not only was this the most successful album of the band's chequered career to date (Top Five in the US and Top Three in Britain), but it's arguably their best album of the 80s, and one of the finest they have ever done.

Bruce Fairbairn was once more in the producer's chair. But if his work on the previous album had come across as being a little stilted, now he gave Aerosmith a lot more freedom and subtlety. There were still outside writers – Child, Vallance – but they were used more sparingly. So the result sounded like a far more satisfying connection between old school Aerosmith musical values and a more modern hard rock sound.

There's a real flow here, from opening track *Young Lust* to the final spurt of *What It Takes*. And it never sounds as if the band are trying to fit in with what younger bands like Guns N' Roses were doing. This is Aerosmith very comfortable with who they are, and out to make a great album on their own terms.

There are some simmering, brilliant songs, such as *Love In An Elevator* (preceded by the suggestive *Going Down*) and the socially aware *Janie's Got A Gun*. Everything is of the highest calibre. There's not a dud from these dudes. It also gave them a new audience, one for whom the 1980s output meant more than anything the band did in the 70s. **MD**

Top track: *Monkey On My Back*. The Tyler-Perry combination at its best. The lyrics give an insight into the band's battle against addiction; the slightly funky groove matches the personal strength of the storyline.



> "The odds of one person staying sober were small. But five guys? Unheard of. In this business no one gets a second chance. Yet we were more successful than ever."
>
> JOE PERRY

GETTY IMAGES

and flung *'Her picture graced the grime on the door'* right back.

Two lines later, though, the fledgling partnership hit a bump in the road. After Tyler's *'She was a long-lost love at first bite'*, Child proposed: *'I threw my money down on the stage/And, well, I didn't care.'*

Tyler thought that "fey" but, in an uncharacteristically tactful reply, merely complained it didn't rhyme, and then fixed it himself with *'Baby maybe you're wrong/ But you know it's all right'*. The rest is rock history.

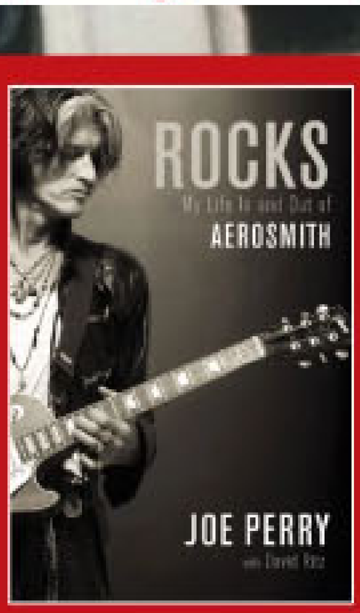
Dude… was the first single released from *Permanent Vacation*, in October 1987 and took Aerosmith to No.14 in the Billboard chart. It later took on a life of its own thanks to the promo clip shot for MTV, its brilliant title (inspired by Mötley Crüe's over-use of the word 'dude' during a New York bar-crawl on which Tyler was present), and its later use on the soundtrack to movies *Mrs Doubtfire* and *Wayne's World 2*.

An even bigger hit, however, was power-ballad *Angel* – co-written by Tyler alone with Child.

These days Perry looks back on the song with mixed feelings, and describes its creation in his book as "a turning point".

Perry: "I would say that was the start of a big change. Steven and I always had this 'team' thing – we would get together and write. Okay, over the years, obviously, he wrote some songs with Tom and with Brad too, but he and I had this thing that was tight, you know? We were friends. He was probably one of the guys I hung around with the most. We didn't go out as a band together because we had other interests. That was how he and I, right from the start, hooked up.

"The band always felt like a democracy – all for one and one for all – but Steven and I had this thing that was one step further, like a lot of songwriting teams in rock'n'roll history, I guess. So it just



GETCHA ROCKS OFF

"In the essential dream of my childhood I'm in the water or the woods. I'm swimming though an ocean of startling clarity. I'm seeing a thousand different varieties of fish; I'm feeling like a fish myself, aware that at any moment a bigger fish might swim my way – a shark or a barracuda. The thought is more exhilarating than frightening."

Yes, that *was* written by the same guy who plays guitar in Aerosmith. It is. It also turns out to be the perfect way to launch a tale that is extraordinary in so many ways. Indeed, for a guy we all recognise, its most extraordinary revelation is that we don't know Joe Perry at all.

And why should we? For over four decades almost every word he's spoken in public has been uttered while sitting alongside his lead singer Steven Tyler. Perry has played the dry-witted straight man tapped up for a quote only when ol' motormouth needs to take a breath. Now, as Perry tells *AOR*: "I wanted to say what I generally don't. One of them was to lay out my side of the story."

Tyler has flippantly declared that he won't read this book and you can be sure that's because he knows he won't like – much less agree with – Perry's side of the story. But Perry knows that too but doesn't flinch from telling truths that must be uncomfortable for both of them. The drinking, drugs and debauchery we expected, but it's the machinations of the business – the band and management politics – that are the real revelations.

"The politics that go on behind the scenes have changed," says Perry, hinting at the schism that exists between the band wherein four of them share one management team and a singer on his "fifth or sixth" since going it alone. "That's what a lot of the book is about – how hard it is to keep a band like this together because of those changes. But we've managed to pull it through because we still love to play love together. That's a really big part of it."

Rocks is a very considered and absorbing read in exactly the way Steven Tyler's stream-of-consciousness *Does The Noise In My Head Bother You?* wasn't. Clearly this is because it bears the co-writer's credit of David Ritz – a four-time winner of the Gleason Music Book Award and clearly no slouch at keeping even the train-wreck parts of JPs life story a-rollin' after his previous experience doing the same for Ray Charles BB King and Aretha Franklin.

The no-holds-barred truths that emerge paint the picture of a single-minded but unexpectedly vulnerable man. For all his distrust of Aerosmith's old management, he speaks with genuine love of their original mentor Frank Connelly – and doesn't flinch from telling how it went wrong with Tim Collins, the man behind their 1980s rebirth.

From playing at Jacques Cousteau to styling himself on the cover of *Bo Diddley Is A Gunslinger*, from loving British blues to living the American dream – it's all here. **NJ**

Joe Perry's *Rocks: My Life In And Out Of Aerosmith* is available now via Simon & Schuster.

I hope you like jamming too: Jimmy Crespo (right) rehearses with Tom Hamilton and Brad Whitford, 1982.

CUT OUT: ROSS HALFIN/MAIN IMAGE: MARK WEISS

surprised me that he would sit down overnight and do that.

"I literally lived five minutes away so it really shocked me that he didn't phone up and say, 'We're working on something new, come over.' When I found out he had it was like: Wait a minute, I thought we were friends. I thought we were songwriting partners. It just didn't even cross his mind that it would be a blow to me."

Perry, note, had no problem with the song itself... Indeed while some hardcore Aerosmith fans saw the song as overly commercial, the ballad style and format was part of the band's DNA. Their first album contained *Dream On*, the second *Seasons Of Wither*, while *Toys In The Attic* and *Rocks* closed with *You See Me Crying* and *Home Tonight*, respectively. And although that softer side was mainly down to Tyler, Perry himself did it with *Play The Game* off the third Joe Perry Project album, *I've Got The Rock'N'Rolls Again*. As much as they were known for hard rock, part of Aerosmith had *always* been an AOR band.

* * *

Permanent Vacation was released at the end of August 1987. In October, amid a flurry of interviews revealing how they'd kicked the habits that had been killing them, the reborn Aerosmith took to the road in America. The tour would run until September 1988 and take them back to the level of their mid-70s heydays. Before the tour's close, the album would be certified double platinum in the US, with *Angel* reaching No.3 to become their biggest hit to date, surpassing even *Dream On* when it was re-released in 1976, off the back of *Toys In The Attic*'s success.

In February 1989, after a four-month break, Aerosmith took that success and euphoria back into Little Mountain to hook up with Bruce Fairbairn and co once more, to make *Pump*. Released three months before the end of the decade in which they'd reached rock bottom, *Pump* took them to their greatest heights yet.

"*Pump* really felt like that band had back in the 70s," says Perry. "I sometimes get confused talking about *Pump* and *Rocks*. . . Those are two hot points in our two careers."

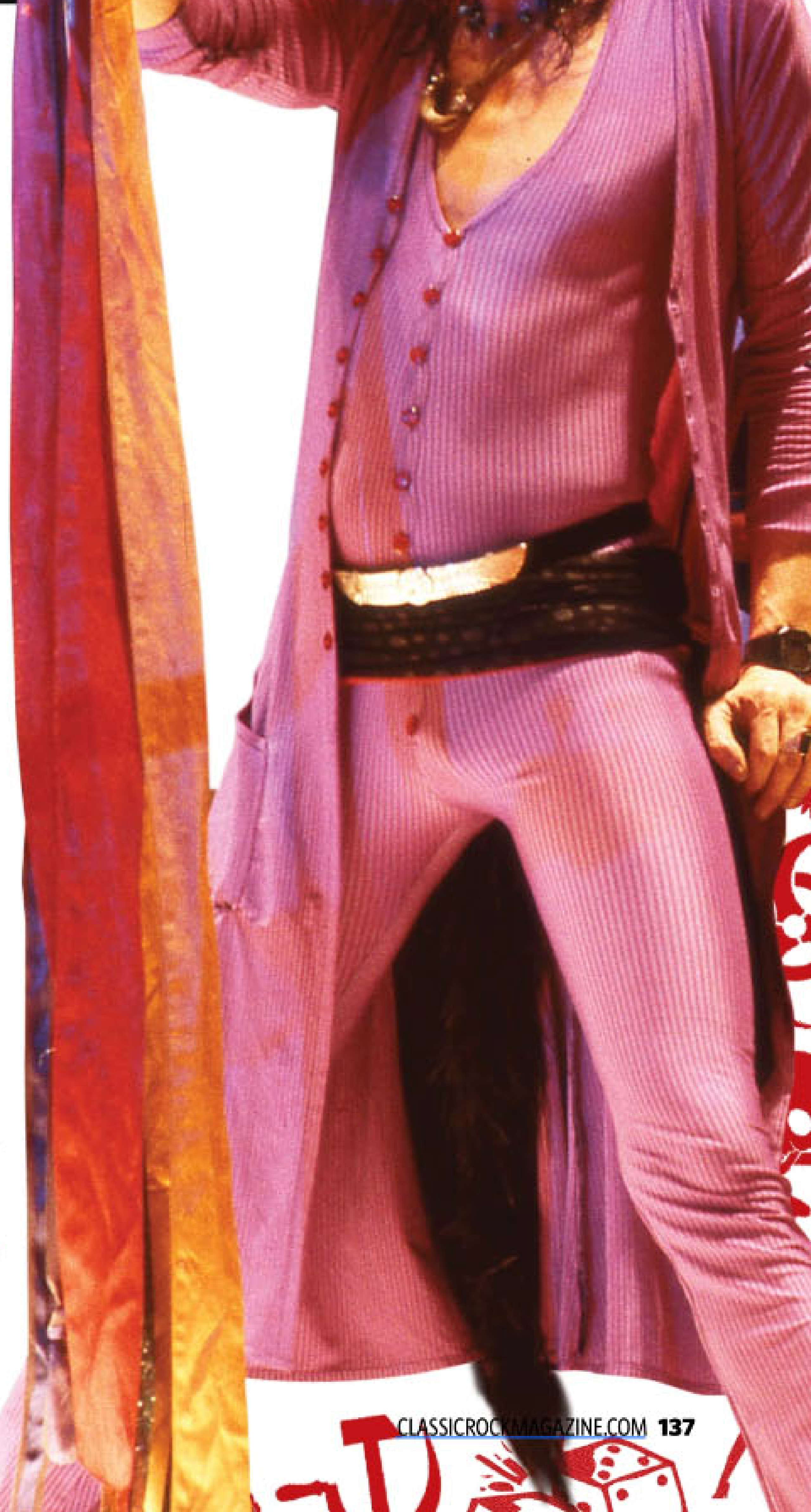
Pump yielded six singles to *Permanent Vacation*'s four, reached No.5 in the Billboard chart and No.3 in the UK. The success fuelled a 12-month tour that began in Europe in October – a territory they'd avoided since a few tentative dates in the late 70s – and continued around the world, ending in Australia. Aerosmith were, finally, a global act.

Tyler: "The best tours are the ones that are propelled by hit singles. The tour's the surfboard, the wave is your popularity. It's a wave 20 feet tall, and you're riding that fucker as long as you can."

Aerosmith were back, and as big as they ever were. Impossible as it seemed.

Perry: "The odds of one person staying sober were small. But five guys? Unheard of. In this business no one gets a second chance. Yet we were more successful than ever." STOP

Based on a new interview with Joe Perry, with additional material from Rocks: My Life In And Out Of Aerosmith by Joe Perry, Does The Noise In My Head Bother You? by Steven Tyler and Walk This Way – The Authorised Biography Of Aerosmith by Stephen Davis.



WELCOME
ROCKLAHOMA
FANS
Miller Lite
Miller Genuine Draft
Dr Pepper
VIP ENTRA
DRINK A NICE ICE COL

Heading into the lion's den (of iniquity): *Classic Rock* correspondent Sleazegrinder.

Hair Metal Apocalypse

The horror! The horror! This summer 100,000 rock fans watched the cream of glam metal in a field in the middle of bloody nowhere. *Classic Rock* peered into the heart of darkness as **Poison**, **Ratt**, **Dokken**, **Quiet Riot**, **Twisted Sister** and more brazenly brought spandex rock back to the people.

WORDS: SLEAZEGRINDER
PICTURES: MARK WEISS

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: GUY WEISS

BOOM! Flash-bombs burst to life 10 feet in front of me, shattering my already-frazzled nerves and singeing my eyebrows. I am standing on a flimsy plywood platform 20 feet in the air, on the left side of the cavernous Rocklahoma stage. I look out at the endless grassy field that surrounds the concrete embankment, and there are teeming masses at every angle; thousands and thousands of people, most of them in some stage of rowdy drunkenness. The platform I stand on is filled with bubbly, giggling blondes, most of them somewhere in their early 20s. From the smeared lipstick on some of their faces, it looks like a few of them got up here the hard way.

"Oh-my-God, I cannot believe I'm here!" the girl next to me screams. "I can't believe it. I think I'm gonna fuckin' pee!"

Her friend laughs. "Oh God, me too!" she says. "I hope we don't fuckin' pee up here!"

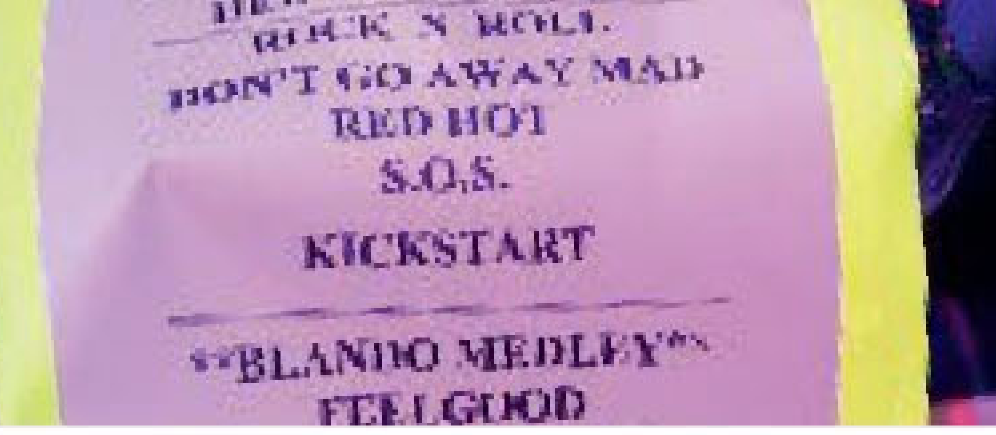
More bombs go off, and just below me Poison launch into *Unskinny Bop*…

Welcome to my nightmare.

The town of Pryor is just a tiny dot on the evergreen map of Oklahoma. Forty-five minutes outside of Tulsa, it is home to 16,000 people, a couple of chain restaurants, a tiny cinema that only shows family movies, and that's pretty much it. Oh, and a gigantic concrete stage in the middle of a 400-acre field. Said stage has been the annual home of the Country Fever festival for the past few summers, but this year, it is home to the biggest glam-metal hoedown ever concocted in these United States or anywhere else.

The three-day long Rocklahoma festival is the Woodstock of hair metal. Any band that ever sold their weight in Aqua Net is on the bill: Poison, Ratt, Dokken, Quiet Riot, Twisted Sister, the whole motley crew of 80s poser rock, from the arena headliners down to the barrel-scraping also-rans. For a rock critic, this is a very existential sort of hell, but for a vast field of pumped-up punters, this is clearly the concert of the year, if not the decade.

It all started in Memphis, when I was on assignment with photographer Mark Weiss. Mark shot all of the major glam-metal bands for *Circus* magazine back in the 1980s, and also shot many of the seminal album covers of era, including Bon Jovi's *Slippery When Wet*. He is a legend among that tribe, as rock-star-famous as many of the bands. He convinced me that this would be the assignment to end all assignments, a chance to roll in the mud with the cream of the spandex crop for a weekend of utter



LIVE WIRE
PIECE OF YOUR ACTION
HELTER SKELTER
ROCK N ROLL.
DON'T GO AWAY MAD
RED HOT
S.O.S.
KICKSTART
BLANDO MEDLEY
FEELGOOD

"This is one heck of a party, and we're ready to party. It's gonna be a big rock show and a real big party." – Mark Slaughter

rock'n'roll debauchery.

"But Mark", I protested, "do people really want a three-day glam-metal festival? I mean, what the fuck?"

Mark just stared at me. Of course they did. So I agreed. And I got on an airplane to Oklahoma.

While at the airport, I get my first text message from Mark. It says: 'Please pick up a quart of 1050 motor oil and the biggest bottle of Jack Daniel's you can find.'

The former is for the recreational vehicle he's rented for the weekend. The latter, I am assuming, is so he can get drunk. After renting a particularly vulgar SUV, I buy Mark's supplies and head out to the campgrounds. It is impossible to get lost on your way to Rocklahoma because there is only one road to take you there. Veering off of it will simply land you in an open field somewhere. It's a lonely stretch of highway populated mostly by squashed armadillos. Some good that armour does them. Halfway there, a torrential downpour kicks in, blinding me. If there was anybody else on the road, I may have ploughed into them, but that's the beauty of Oklahoma. There's too much space to crash. It's about this time that I get my second text from Mark. He wants me to buy boots for him and his 14-year-old son, Guy. Apparently the festival has just turned into Mudlahoma.

I finally arrive on the grounds at 3pm on Friday, but, just like in a horror movie, my cellphone has no signal, and I can't reach Mark. He's got my backstage pass, so I'm forced to wait in the media tent while someone on the security staff looks for him.

The media tent is full of rock-journo dregs, the kind of guys that love mentioning out loud stuff like, "I remember talking to you back when you were opening for The Cult in 1987…" and actually expecting the aging boozer on the mic to go, "Oh yeah, that was a great conversation!" I have no idea who any of these journalists are, but they look weathered and desperate. Steven Adler is fielding questions when I enter the tent. He's in the middle of the same conversation I've heard from him a hundred times in the past few months, about the night he spent recently in the court of Axl Rose.

"We kissed and hugged and made-up," he says. Some dude asks him if he apologised for what happened between him and the rest of the band.

"No man, they should apologise to me," he chuckles. "Fuck them."

The guy who wants everybody to remember him says: "What happened to the camaraderie you used to have with those guys?"

"Drugs," replies Adler. And for the rest of his time, he uses that one word answer for everything. It does explain a lot.

Meanwhile, I am sinking in the mud, the top of my head is burning, and I still don't have a pass. A young girl in a ponytail whizzes by on a motorised cart.

"We still haven't found Mark," she says, "and Rob says he's never heard of you."

Rob Miller is one of the event's promoters. I've heard of him, so it doesn't really seem fair.

Meanwhile, Adler has ambled off the stage, and the charismatic Mark Slaughter, frontman for the humbly named Slaughter, is now fielding questions. Lord knows what the question was, but here is Mark's answer: "This is one heck of a party, and we're ready to party. We're getting ready to go on, and it's gonna be a big rock show. A real big party."

I don't know what happened next. I might have blacked out for a second. All I know is that the next thing I heard was the Remember-Me Guy saying – and this is a direct quote – "Obviously, your album *Stick It To Ya* was a brilliant piece of work…"

I have to get the fuck outta this media tent before my brains turn to pudding.

Eventually I get my pass, although I still have not seen Mark, and have no idea where anything is. Luckily, I run into Jim Florentine, a popular

“I’m used to playing huge crowds, but I’m used to playing to three people, too. There’s no difference.” – Mike Tramp

stand-up comic from New York City. He’s here to pump up the crowd between sets later on with lines like, “They say that if you drink and drive, you lose. Well, if I make it home alive, than I won, motherfucker.” We head to the front of the stage together to see Y&T, who are playing in the blazing sun for a few hundred people. There are 3,000 seats in front of the stage. Some have paid upwards of $250 for the ones up front, but apparently that’s still not incentive enough to show up early. We grab front row seats and watch the band bash through their early 80s hits.

Florentine tells me that his goal this weekend is to “Fuck a MILF”. He certainly has plenty to choose from. The crowd is lousy with attractive 35-year-old women. They did, after all, buy all these bands’ records 20 years ago. I am actually surprised at how well-preserved the crowd looks. I expected beer bellies and mullets, but perhaps they’re in the cheap seats. You don’t get much riff-raff in the $300 section. Later in the day I talked to Rob Miller, the dude that’d never heard of me, and he confirmed my observations.

“I’m not saying we don’t have mullets here,” he says, “but I started seeing doctors, lawyers, people with really good jobs coming to see these bands, and I thought, this might really be the time to see transition in what we call ‘classic rock’, and I think we have a new genre, New Classic Rock.” Egads.

You could still snag a general admission pass for $35 though, which explains the ragged army of young drunks that invade after nightfall. But during the day, it’s strictly for the hardcore.

I head backstage after Y&T and run into Bang Tango frontman Joe LeSté. His band are playing a punishing set at 11 tomorrow morning, but today he’s feeling fine, slapping hands with old friends and trading Paul Stanley stories with yet another stand-up comic, Craig Gass.

“You know how Paul Stanley used to swing in from a wire?” Joe asks. “One night when we were touring with Kiss, he got stuck, and he was going, ‘People, in the name of rock’n’roll, get me down from here!’”

“I saw them in Las Vegas,” says Gass, “and I swear to God, he said, ‘This town is known for its buffets, and let me tell you, there’s some people in the front row that I really want to eat!’”

I ask Joe how he feels about playing so early at a festival like this.

“Dude, I love it. We have no pressure. We go in there, play all our old shit, and then get the fuck out. I wouldn’t want to be Poison, carrying this whole show on their backs.”

I like the guy. He oozes malevolent sleaze, and he has diminished expectations. No wonder he’s lasted so long in this game.

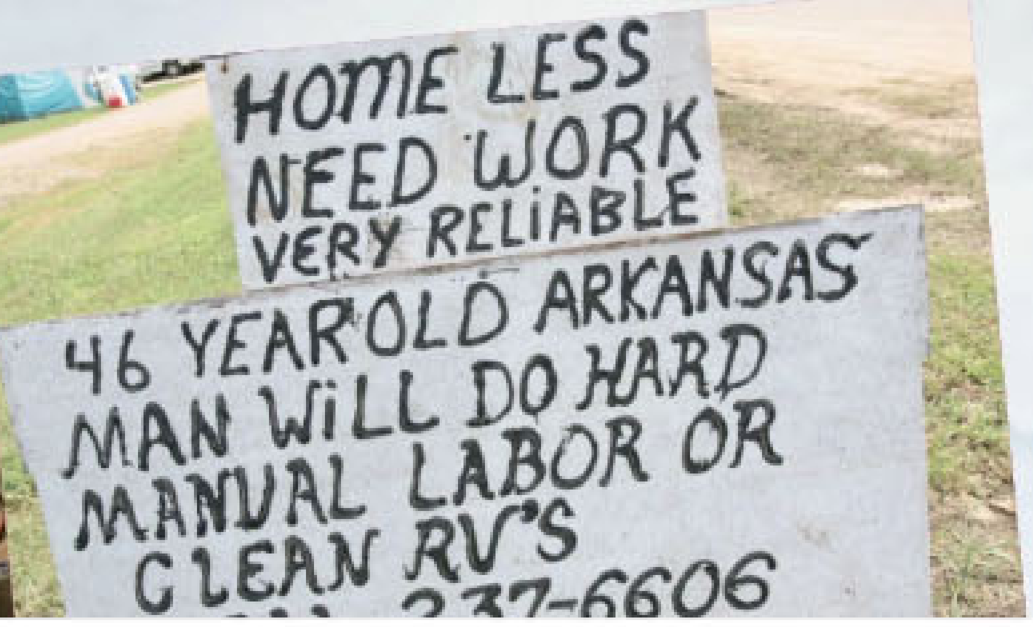
Eventually I run into Mark Weiss, and we head back to the motor-home. While Slaughter have their heck-of-a-party on stage, a trickle of rock stars begins to stream in and out of our RV. We have air conditioning, after all. And whiskey. CJ Snare and Michael Foster from FireHouse are our first guests. I have never heard a lick of their music, but I know chicks liked them, which was all anybody ever asked out of this stuff. I ask them how they managed to stay afloat during the lean years, and they told me something I would hear over and over again during the weekend.

“We played in India for 40,000 people. And that was just us,” CJ beams. “We do really good in Southeast Asia. During the grunge era when people were tearing this kind of music down, South America and Southeast Asia kept us going.”

I search for the look of defeat in their eyes, but there is none. Especially not now. Like many of these bands, FireHouse have been making the rounds in impoverished third-world countries, where glam metal’s grand promise of ‘nuthin’ but a good time’ is especially attractive. But the success of Rocklahoma – evident even now, before the first night is even over – offers a glimpse of former glories returning on the bands’ home turf. Goodbye Saigon, hello Cleveland. That’s the plan, anyway.

At 7pm, a very remarkable thing happens. From behind a wall of amps on stage, the sound of a screaming metal guitar is heard. Said guitar is ripping out an impressively Hendrix-y take on the *Star Spangled Banner* as some sort of military manoeuvre with marines and flags goes on up front. Suddenly, a Black Hawk helicopter pops up from seemingly from nowhere and hovers, menacingly, above the crowd. I found the whole thing terrifying, but people cheered wildly, so perhaps that was the wrong reaction. The guitarist was Greg Leon, a legendary figure in this genre. Leon was an early member of Quiet Riot (the band that Randy Rhoads left to join Ozzy’s band), and he was the pre-George Lynch guitarist in Dokken. He’s fronted his own band – Greg Leon Invasion – for some time, but he’s still widely regarded as one of the architects of the hair-metal movement. I talked to him shortly after his patriotic display.

“Guys like Marq Torien, Kevin DuBrow, Don Dokken and all the people on the bill that I know have been saying, ‘Greg’s the guy, he started all this stuff back in Hollywood’, and everybody took their cues from me, Randy, Eddie and George Lynch,”



Rock of Love
with BRET MICHAELS
PREVOST

> **"We beat the shit out of each other on a regular basis. It's like being married times four."** – Bobby Dall on Poison's longevity

Greg gushes. "We were the guys that pretty much invented this style and the whole Los Angeles scene."

Of everybody I've met, Leon is the most optimistic about Rocklahoma. For him, it is quite obviously the second chance he's been waiting the past 20 years for.

"It's like 'build it, and they will come'. That's obviously the case here," he says. "I mean, it's pretty obvious. The world can be a much better place with music that makes you feel good about life and living and having fun again."

The next time I see Greg, he doesn't look so optimistic. On Saturday night, his *Star Spangled Banner* is pre-empted when Skid Row decide they want to do their own version. I saw him in the press office later that evening, angrily grousing that "Skid Row will never play this festival again!"

I got the feeling that maybe it would be the other way around.

White Lion mainman Mike Tramp hops on the RV as dusk settles in. When he hears that I'm from *Classic Rock* magazine, he laughs.

"I raised the guys in that magazine," he says, without naming names. "They used to be crawling around in our back lounge, getting blowjobs."

White Lion are easily one of the most recognisable bands on the bill today, but they were saddled with a godawful 4:15pm time slot. Tramp shrugs it off.

"I'm used to playing huge crowds, but I'm used to playing to three people, too," he says. "There's no difference."

I ask him why he thinks there are 30,000 people here to see bands 20 years past their prime.

"Pull into any truckstop and you'll find 'Monsters of the 80s' CDs," he says. "The music has never really gone away, and this is why. You grow up, you get married, you have kids, and one day you pick up an old White Lion record and you go, 'Fuck, that's my life right here!'"

Indeed.

At this point, it's finally dark. Quiet Riot are on stage. At least lead singer Kevin DuBrow and drummer Frankie Banali are. Like many of the bands this weekend, QR are missing key members of their classic line-ups. In fact, most bands fall into two categories: classic lead singer with new back-up band (Slaughter, Bang Tango, Vince Neil, Dokken, Faster Pussycat), or classic band line-up with new lead singer (Warrant, Skid Row, Britny Fox, LA Guns). To my thinking, this is flying the flag at half-mast. But my thinking has nothing to do with this festival, because no one seems to care. It's obvious that this crowd is about the songs, not the singers.

Kevin DuBrow is the first one to use the term 'Cokelahoma', as I knew he would be. Quiet Riot manage to stretch their meagre hits out into bluesy, 10-minute jams, and they go down a storm. So do Ratt, who have finally managed to convince original frontman Stephen Pearcy to join them again. Former part-time Mötley Crüe singer John Corabi is also playing guitar with them. Pearcy's voice sounds like a deflating balloon, and he barely addresses the crowd. During guitar solos, he slinks back by the amps and waits for his next cue. It is not a world-class display. In fact, it's not even a good bar-band display, but again, I am outnumbered. They play *Round & Round*, and that's all anyone really wanted.

I finally find another dissenting voice in the beer tent backstage. A thick-hipped blonde with a full-access laminate snorts when I mention Stephen Pearcy.

"I can't stand that guy," she says. "I wish Jizzy Pearl was playing with Ratt tonight."

I ask her why she doesn't like Pearcy, and she shows me her pinky finger.

"Because he's hung like this," she says.

Apparently, there is plenty of sleaze happening just below the surface at this festival, but it continues to evade my watchful eye. I run into Jim Florentine again. He's spent the afternoon with a crew from shock-jock Howard Stern's show. They've been baiting punters in the cheap seats for laughs.

"Dude, you just missed this chick who offered to blow us all," he says. "Seriously, she said, 'I'll take on anyone of you, let's go.'"

I ask if anybody took her up on it. "Yeah, right," he says. Apparently, blowjobs in the dirt are too low-class for New Yorkers.

Suddenly, four separate buses drive into the backstage area. All four have the name of a Poison member on the back. The headliners have arrived. After a bit of wrangling on Mark Weiss's part, I eventually end up on bass player Bobby Dall's bus. It is not filled with nubile young women. Instead, it's filled with Dall's family members. As I speak to him, he is getting his hair done by his personal stylist. He talks like a politician, and with his gleaming white teeth and sincere smile,

MULLET ISLAND

"There's a void out there. People looked at this type of music for so many years as taboo, and that's so untrue." – Dave Sabo

I think I'd vote for the fuckin' guy. I ask Bobby why he thinks Poison arrive in separate busses while The BulletBoys are forced to play at 1pm. Just where did everybody else go wrong?

" I don't think The BulletBoys did anything wrong," Bobby offers. "I think the music business is cyclical, and like any genre, the cream rises to the top. Out of the 80s came Poison, Mötley Crüe, Bon Jovi and Def Leppard. We're the four that survived the era. I don't know that anybody did anything wrong, I just think we did it right by maintaining our headliner status. We've always delivered a great live show, and that's why we've continued to be successful."

Double-speak. Pure Hollywood. I mention to him that Poison are the only band on the bill today with their original line-up. He chalks it up to mutual loathing.

"We beat the shit out of each other on a regular basis. It's like being married times four. You show me a band that's been together for 20 years and they still like each other, I guarantee you they suck."

Poison do not suck. In fact, they razzle-dazzle the audience with hit after hit, and Bret Michaels's natural charisma carries him through.

Halfway through Poison's set, Bret introduces a bunch of Marines and army infantry. The soldiers bound on to the stage to join the band for a song. Bret says, "This is what we're fighting for, right here!" For what, sir, the right to have rock festivals? It's pure patriot porn that, in a sane world, would horrify the audience. And then I realised that I was in Oklahoma. The crowd went fuckin' nuts. Back at the grounds entrance, there's a rogues' gallery of vendors and pitch-men, and the biggest presence there are military recruiters. Earlier in the day, I wandered back to see Marines polishing M-16s and a giant blow-up Sergeant hovering over a recruitment tent. I can't imagine a scene like that happening anywhere but at a glam metal festival. This is America, baby. Apple pie, hair metal, and machine guns. Poison's show ends up with lots of explosions, as it should.

After the show, I am not allowed on Bret Michaels's bus, where surely, all the real hardcore debauchery is going down. I am, after all, a journalist. No friend to dark secrets. Mark Weiss, however, gets on without a problem. He returns to the RV at 5am. I ask him what happened, and he says, "Nothing, really." But he's smiling when he says it.

I have been up for 40 hours straight. I finally pass out as bright sunlight creeps through the windows.

Saturday afternoon. It's terribly hot. Bang Tango play, and they are a shambles. Steven Adler wanders on to the stage halfway through and barrels through a few GN'R covers. Tango also have a rock-chick back-up singer with flowing purple hair for a few numbers. She will be the only female presence on the stage for the entire weekend. After the set, I run into her backstage. Her name is Felicity, and she tells me she sang back-up on *Girls Girls Girls*. She's hoping to convince Vince Neil to let her sing with him tonight.

"It's the only chance I get to do anything with these guys," she says. "It's either sing back-up or fuck them, and I really don't want to fuck them."

Glam metal is notoriously macho music, and it has never had a place for women, except in the most subservient of roles. Twenty years later, it is still this way. Felicity takes the high road, but most of the women backstage are content to merely jiggle for attention. One bottle-blonde in particular makes an especially big splash. She has breasts the size of cannonballs, and has her picture taken with every long-haired guy backstage. "For $12,000, you could have these tits, too," she says at one point. I have no idea what she means by that.

Meanwhile, the show goes on. Just like they were in the in the old days, Faster Pussycat look the best and play the worst of all the bands. Taime Downe baits the crowd as his pick-up band consistently fail to play any of the songs all the way through.

"We're like a 12-year-old pussy, we don't know what the fuck we're doing," he says. There's a pervasive mediocrity to the second day's line-up that's exhausting to slog through. Bands with barely 10 minutes' worth of recognisable songs grind through a full hour of b-list material. The crowd is more visibly restless today. I hear snatches of alarming conversations, like the young girl beside me who screams into her cellphone: "That motherfucker is gonna threaten me with guns? I've got 10 fuckin' guns! He's gonna eat my fuckin' gun tonight!" The field stinks like a slaughterhouse, and there are piles of trash everywhere. Food vendors hawk noxious rubbish like foot-long corndogs and the beer tents are packed. It's so hot that clothes are peeling off everywhere. I spot one girl roaming around in a nothing but a half-shirt and a pair of Bang Tango panties. They say 'Get Banged' on the ass.

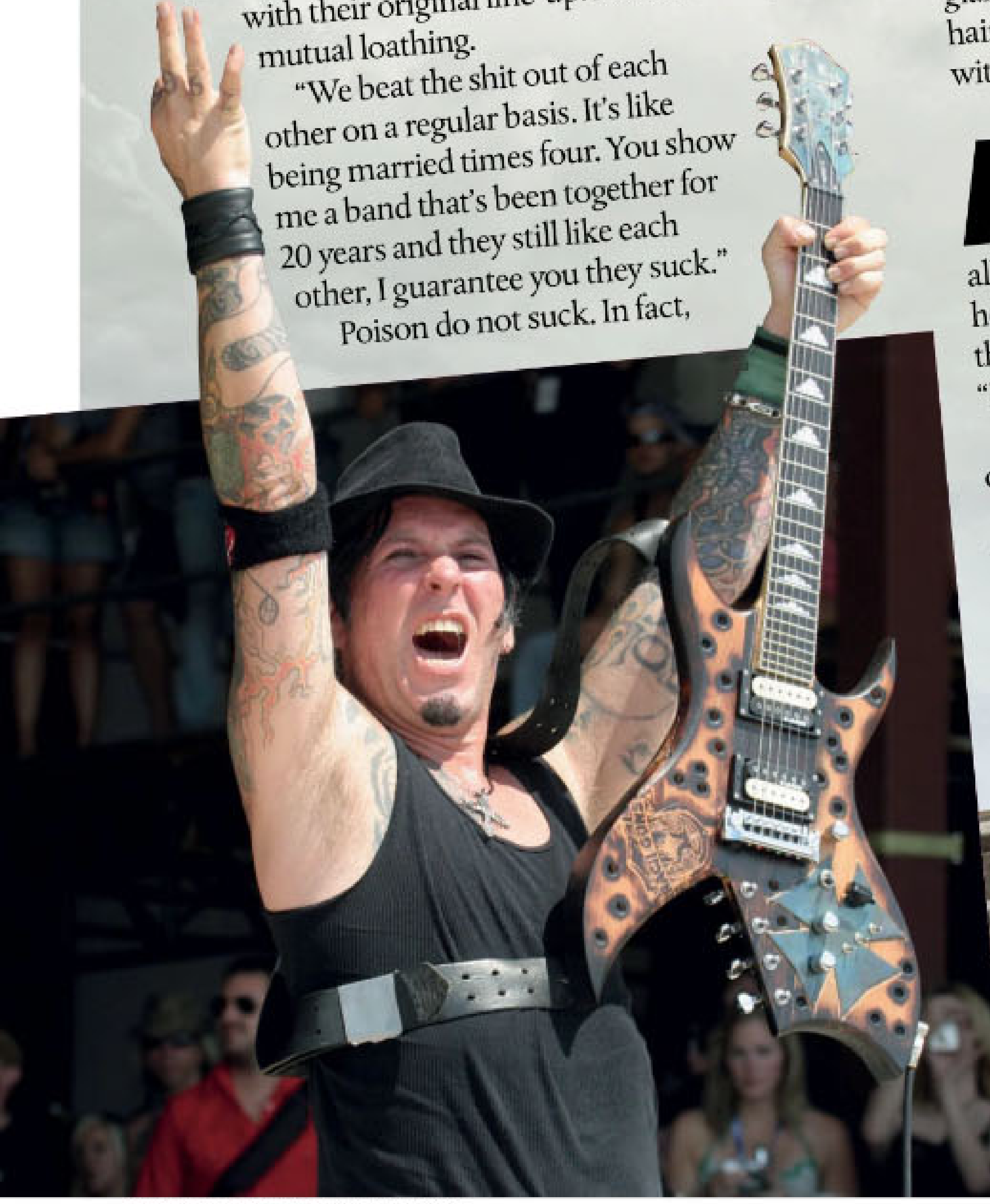
I retreat back to the RV where I run into Skid Row bassist, Dave 'Snake' Sabo. For many years, Skid Row have tried to distance themselves from the glam-metal tag, insisting that they were harder, meaner, tougher then these hairspray pussies, but for the weekend at least, Snake is happy to be here.

"There's a void out there," he tells me. "People looked at this type of music for so many years as taboo, like it never had any impact, and that's so untrue. It all comes down to wanting to enjoy yourself in a wonderful, uplifting atmosphere, and that's what this thing is."

For their part, Skid Row put on a rip-roaring set, despite the fact that their guitarist, Rachel Bolan, appears to be dying in front of us. The victim of some awful stomach virus, he is visibly ill for the entire set, and at one point, begs host Eddie Trunk to get him some oxygen. Thankfully, everyone survives the night.

Later, after an enthusiastically received set, Kip Winger joins us on the RV. Kip is probably the most self-aware rock star at this festival, and when he speaks, it's with a bemused resolution.

"We made it so big at this one thing, that



ROCKLAHOMA 2007
ROCKLAHOMA 2007

MULLET
ISLAND

"It's either sing back-up with these guys or fuck them, and I really don't want to fuck them." – Felicity, Bang Tango's backing singer

it's impossible to grow out of it," he shrugs. "Then the grunge thing came along and decimated this kind of music. But grunge lasted a lot less. You're not gonna see Grunge-lahoma anytime soon."

I talk to Kip about the awkward military presence at the festival, and we both agree that glam metal is, at its core, right-wing rock n' roll.

"America is a monster show," I tell him.

"It's like a giant puppy with razor-sharp teeth," he adds.

Eventually, after a surprisingly rousing set by Dokken, Vince Neil hits the stage. Mere moments before, his bass player, Dana Strum, was on the RV, discussing the enduring appeal of his oft-maligned frontman.

"Vince is one of those icon front guys," he says. "He's necessary. You'd have to remove an important part of rock history if it weren't for him and a handful of other guys."

Strum is a founding member of both Slaughter and the Vinnie Vincent Invasion. He even introduced Randy Rhoads to Ozzy. He's been an unapologetic hair-metal booster since the beginning. And he's not about to apologise now.

"When you become popular on the level of MTV, people love to hate you. I was one of those people that was loved to be hated, so I know. I've lived through all of this, I've got gold records, I know what it's like when you're up, and I know what it's like when you're down, when nobody wants to hear your kind of music anymore. People always say, 'Oh, the punk movement, *that's* balls'. Well, it takes balls to just believe in what you do and hang tough with it through all the horseshit. That defines rock'n'roll."

A half an hour later, and that definition is a little fuzzy. I do have to commend Vince Neil on his plastic surgery and the hours he put in at the gym, because he looks great. But he does not know the words to any of his songs. Since he's been singing many of them for over 20 years, there are only two possible explanations for this: either he is an even more cavalier performer than I thought he was, or his brains are scrambled.

Four songs into the set, Vince wanders off the stage, leaving his band to perform a medley of Zep and Sabbath songs without him. The second song in is *War Pigs*, which Dana and the boys leave to the crowd to sing. I wonder if the audience senses the irony of lines like, *'In the fields the bodies burning/As the war machine keeps turning'* while they are being actively recruited for one of those burning-bodies wars every time they venture across the field for a beer?

Vince Neil eventually makes it back on stage. "Who knows this next song?" he says, as the revving thrum of *Dr Feelgood* kicks in.

I hope somebody does, because he sure doesn't. About this time, a girl in front of me, sitting on her boyfriend's shoulders, takes off her shirt. She does so, ostensibly, because there's a camera on a crane roaming in the area.

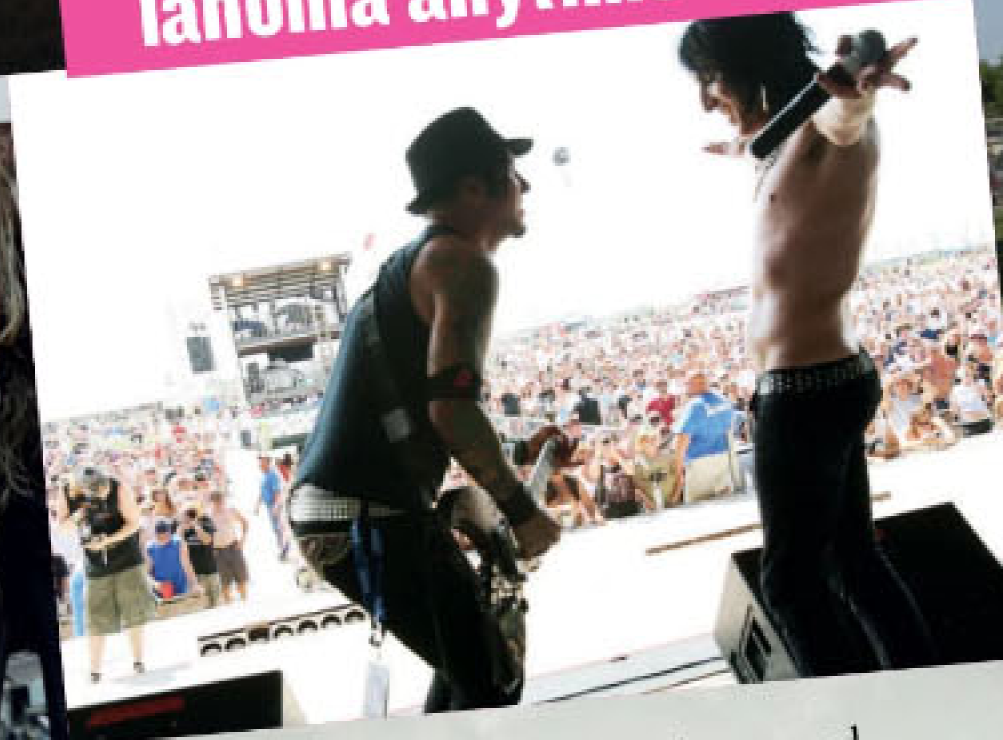
When the camera misses her, she makes her boyfriend turn around, so we can all get a full view of her breasts. Instantly, half a dozen guys pull out digital cameras and start snapping away.

She seems pleased by this.

Later that night, Vince Neil's band hosts a party at the press office, but they make a clean getaway before anyone actually sees them. I find myself having a tense discussion with the Gene Simmons guy in the Kiss Army, the Kiss tribute band that played the festival on Thursday night. He is actually dressed as Gene Simmons when I tell him that I think anybody who listens to Kiss over the age of 14 may have developmental problems.

Meanwhile, while all the rock stars sleep, the party has just begun at Mullet Island. Just on the other side of the fence are the campgrounds, where VIP ticket holders are allowed to stay all weekend. Most have rented motor homes, and a makeshift city has formed over night. People have pools and barbecues, and parties form everywhere. There's even a fully-fleshed Tiki Bar, Mullet Island, complete with a bamboo dance floor and a stripper pole. This is where the mayhem really kicks in. Somebody offers up a new guitar as a prize in a stripping contest, and three women from the crowd are up to the challenge. On the surface it seems like innocent fun, but on closer inspection, the women are all being openly

"Grunge decimated this kind of music. But you're not going to see a Grunge-lahoma anytime soon." – Kip Winger



groped by a dozen random guys that crowd around them.

Thankfully, the king of Mullet Island finally gives one of the girls the goddamn guitar, before things get ugly.

Sunday rolls around. Another scorcher. I watched a small team of event workers canvas the field, picking up the tons of trash left over from Saturday night. It's a remarkable clean-up effort. By first light, the place looks good as new. And by 10am, it's trashed again. Sunday's line-up is headlined by Twisted Sister and Queensrÿche, but I will be long gone by then. I am now as red as a boiled lobster, I've slept for maybe three hours in the past 36, I've been eating nothing but fried dough and drinking Dr Pepper for three days, and I think if I don't get home soon that I will surely die. I run into Brad White, one of the promoters responsible for this assault on my senses, and I ask him if we will ever see the likes of Rocklahoma again.

"We've sold tickets in six continents, in every state in the US, and in countless countries," he says of this year's festival. And that is undoubtedly true. Over the past few days I've met an Australian photographer, Japanese record label executives, Africa's No.1 Twisted Sister fan, and plenty of drunken Swedes. I've talked to military men and 50-year-old hippies, mouthy teenagers and kindly grandparents. And all of them, across the board, *loved* Rocklahoma.

"We're already planning the next one," Brad says, "and I can tell you that we're going across the pond." When I press him for details, he is vague, but offers this up: "When I was growing up, it was cool to like Poison *and* Iron Maiden."

The last band I see before I escape is LA Guns. I am actually surprised to see the 'Hollywood vampires' out in broad daylight, sweating through their black clothes on a 3pm time slot.

"You gotta eat what they serve you, man," Tracii Guns told me before they went on. When I asked him what was happening after this, he mentioned India.

And with that, I hopped into my mud-covered rental and made my escape. Mark Weiss stayed to see Jackyl, Queensrÿche and Twisted Sister. Mark would surely stay forever if he could. As for me, I'd had my fill and learned my lessons. To be honest, I entered into this festival with all intentions of burying it. To my mind, glam metal has always been a joke without a punchline at best, phony rock'n'roll at worst. And although my thoughts on it have not changed one iota after being battered by the stuff all weekend, I realise now how much it really means to so many people. For that muddy field of freaks, this shit is for real. To at least a few thousand people, *Stick It To Ya* really is a brilliant piece of work. And so, Rocklahoma will go on. I am struck by something Kip Winger said to me earlier.

"It's tough, trying to figure out what you can totally get behind," he said. "You always have to wonder, you know, am I selling out? Dude, I sang the theme for the new season of *The Simple Life*! At the same time, I'm writing a seven-minute orchestral piece. It's a symptom of our society. Everybody has their own dilemma. That's why I would never throw darts at anybody. We're all trying to be authentic."

Sometimes authenticity dons strange disguises. Fluffy hair, acid-washed denim, stuff like that.

In the interest of sleazy rock journalism, I did think it necessary to finish the story, even if I wasn't there for the rest of the festival. So, after I bought a bottle of Aloe Vera gel to soothe my blistering skin, I called Dee Snider, to ask him how he thought his own performance went.

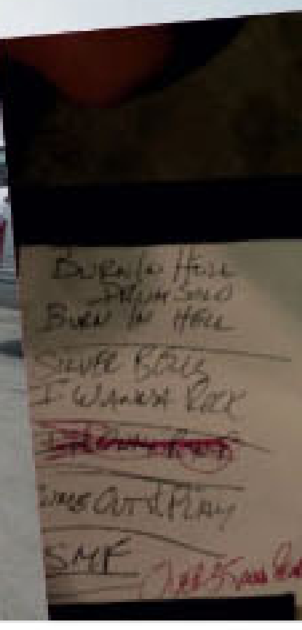
"I was shit," he said, with his usual candour. "The band played great though, and the word is that we went down the best of the weekend. I don't know if that's people sucking my dick or what, though."

I talked to Mark Weiss earlier in the day, and he confirmed that Twisted did, in fact, do down an absolute storm. They even had a snow machine on stage during their now-obligatory Christmas song.

"We have this hit holiday record, but we're like, fuck, it's July, what are we gonna do?" Dee says. "So we got snow machines. We did *Silver Bells*. I had a Santa hat, but it flew off my head the first time I headbanged, much like Angus's hat. We had candy canes that we threw out to the crowd, and we had Christmas lights on the amplifiers. Pretty funny."

Dee dishes dirt about Jackyl playing too long, and about Queensrÿche refusing to play the hits, but his overall impression, like everybody else's, is that Rocklahoma was a resounding success.

"The media dismissed this decade, they wrote it off, but it proves that it matters," he says. "It matters to people. It was, and is, the music of a generation of people. Maybe it didn't change the face of rock'n'roll, but there is a whole generation of people who connected to it and it's part of their lives. That's what that weekend showed." ✖



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